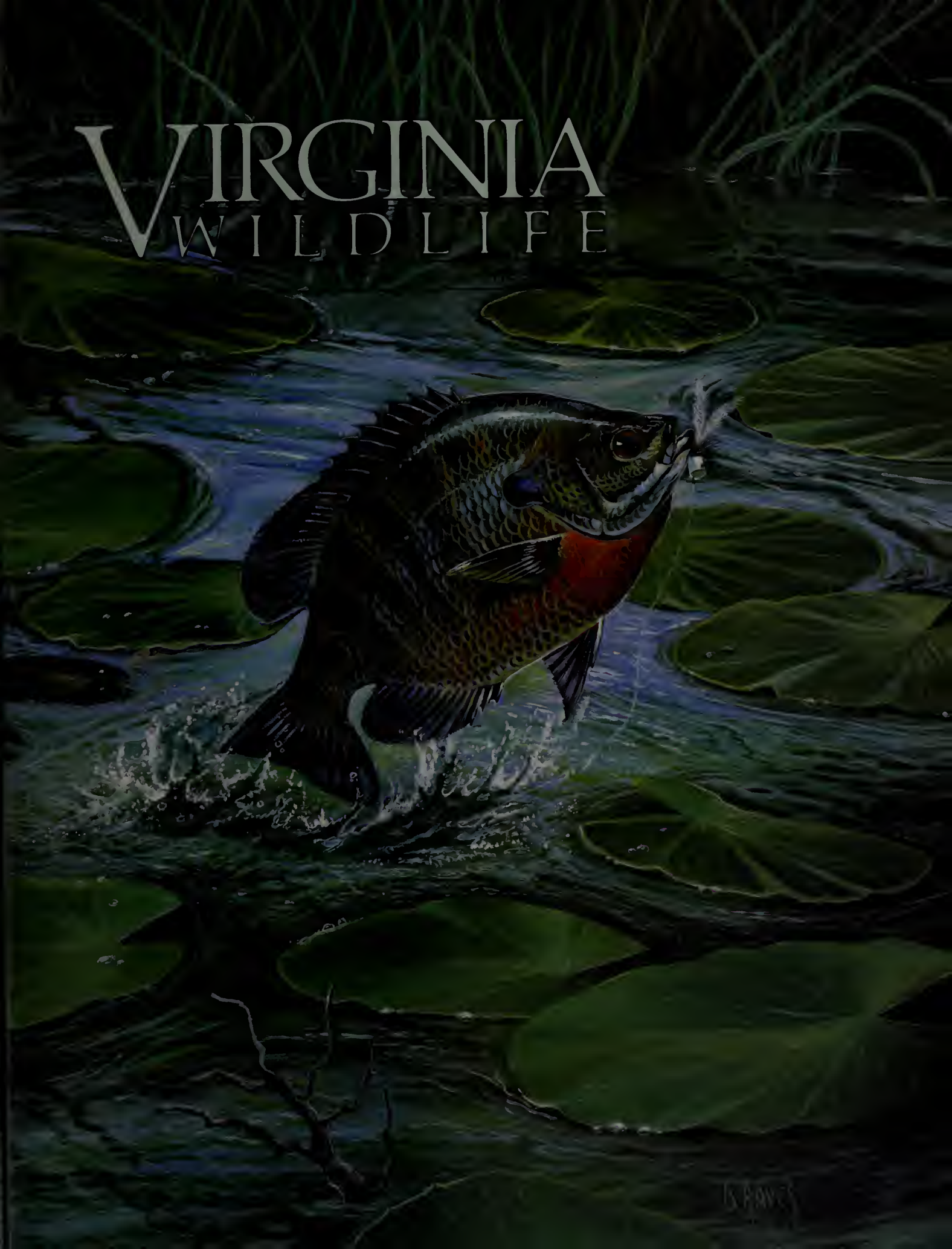
VIRGINIA WILDLIFE



VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Related Natural Resources
Volume 44, Number 4 *April 1983*

Special Fishing Issue

List the harbingers of spring: daffodils, songbirds returning to the back yard, longer, balmier days, baseball, rain showers. . .and put at the top of the list, "Fishin'."

Are you a fly fisherman, traversing the small, out-of-the-way streams of Virginia's mountains? Perhaps you prefer the Eastern Shore's flounder fishing. Maybe you're someplace in between. Is this the year that Junior gets to come along? Perhaps your taste runs toward the lore, or the anecdotes; or do you head straight for the how-to's, or the what-to-do-with-it-now-that-you've-caught-it's? In any case, we think we've got somthing here for you, in features and a special section of practical tips and reminders.

Watch out, fish!

Features

3 The ABC's of Fishing *by Paul C. Johnson*
You don't have to be an expert to teach your favorite youngster to fish

6 Watch Out, Fish! *by Charlie Sledd*
Make sure your boat is ready for that spring fishing debut

9 The Lure of Wood & Steel *by Jack Randolph*
The old wooden plugs can still sink their teeth into the big ones

13 Morris Creek Cappies *by Carl "Spike" Knuth*
Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area provides plenty of action, if you know how to handle a tidal creek

16 Fly Fishing Tackle: A Primer *by Harry W. Murray*
Beginning fly fishermen should take several things into consideration before heading out to Virginia's streams

20 Closed Wednesdays *by Curtis Badger*
At least one flounder fisherman lays business aside to go a-fishin' once a week

24 What's in A Name? *by Dan Shuber*
They are called "bream," but do you know which one is which?

26 Gold Rush at Walker's Dam *by Jack Randolph*
Herring provide plenty of excitement on the Chickahominy

29 A Herring By Any Other Name *by Mel White*
Call them herring or alewives, but here's how to cook them

31 Roanoke River Stripers *by Gerald Almy*
Two old hands still have some lessons to learn

Cover

Bluegill by Duane Raver, Cary, North Carolina.
Back cover: Take A Kid Fishing. Photo by Catharine Tucker, Virginia Beach.

Special Section

Making Lead Heads

The lead head jig has a well earned reputation as one of the most lethal types of lures made for use in salt or fresh water. The lure had its beginning in salt water and proved so effective that it was included in survival kits issued to airmen during World War II.

The jig comes in many sizes and takes many forms. Salt water anglers are familiar with such styles as the boxing glove, lima bean, bullet head and bug-eye. Freshwater anglers use salt water jigs and also some of their own. Many of you may be familiar with the maribou crappie jigs, shad darts, pinkie jigs and many others. The famous spinner baits had their start as lead head jigs to which spinners were attached.

One thing salt and freshwater anglers have in common is that if they use many jigs, they lose lots of them. Purchased over the tackle counter, jigs are relatively inexpensive. If you lose many, however, you may find it less expensive to make your own. Not only do you save a little money, but jig making is fun and the rewards are those only appreciated by anglers who catch fish on lures of their own making.

If you want to make your own jigs you will need molds, hooks, lead, a lead-melting pot, bucktail or other dressing, strong nylon thread, fly head cement, scissors, fly tying vise, flat white metallic paint and enamels or lacquers in colors of your choice.

Molds may be purchased from any of several companies who advertise in outdoor magazines. The better quality molds produce better quality lures, without excessive lead flash that requires so much time to remove. You have to decide which bucktail jigs you are going to make and order the appropriate molds. Be sure to order the hooks that are designed for the molds you order. Making jigs requires hooks with a special bend in them and each mold is built to accomodate a particular style and size.

Small electric lead melters such as the Palmer Hot Pot are excellent for melting lead for fishing lures. You can purchase lead from plumbing supply shops or melt down sinkers, but I generally scrounge up some wheel balancing weights in quantities sufficient for my purposes.

A pair of protective glasses and a pair of welders gloves offer needed protection when working with molten lead. Heat the lead in the hot pot until it has a purple hue on the surface. It is then sufficiently hot to pour well.

Before pouring, the cavities in the mold should be smoked. A candle does a great job of putting a layer of black in the cavities. This helps produce a smoother jig head.

To use the mold, you must first place the hooks in position before closing it and pouring the lead. Since the mold works much better when warm, I usually pour several jigs without hooks, just to heat the jig up. The resulting hookless heads are placed right back in the hot pot. With the jig warm it is just a matter of placing the hooks and molding the jigs. Work quickly so the mold does not cool off between pours. Be very careful not to pick up any hot jig heads with your bare hands.

Regardless of the color you want yours to be, all jig heads, if painted at all, must first be painted with a coat of white paint. If the lead shows through when the paint is dry, apply a second coat. Most folks "paint" jig heads by dipping them it the paint. A block of styrofoam makes an excellent drying rack. Once the base coat is dry you can dip the jig head into the lacquer forming the final coat. Epoxy paint is great for this purpose. Flourescent paints are also good for shad darts and crappie jigs. Some jig makers prefer to tie on the dressing before applying the final coat of paint. Done this way, it is possible to dip the finished lure so that the paint covers the windings that hold the dressing in place.

illustration by Phyllis Saroff

To apply the dressing, place the jig hook in a fly tying vise. With a toothpick apply a little fly head cement at the point on the jig where the dressing will be tied.

I use strong white nylon rod winding thread to tie bucktail to the jig. Make several winds around the jig and tie off with a half hitch. Apply a little more cement to the thread wrapped on the jig. Cut off a small bunch of bucktail and tie it in position with several wraps of the thread. Do not apply too much tension to the thread until about the third wrap or the butt ends of the bucktail will flare. Wrap as close to the butts as possible to prevent this. Tie off with a half hitch and apply a second bunch of bucktail until you have applied enough dressing. Wrap to completely cover the butt ends of the bucktail and complete with three half hitches. Apply lots of cement all the way, working as much as possible into the butts of the bucktail. Cover the finished wrap with cement, but keep cement away from the paint because it will react with it.

There are many variations in making jigs. You may, for example, prefer to make rubber skirted dressings. Such rubber is available in strips. You simply tie the strip to the jig. When completed, you stretch the strip of rubber which has been perforated by the factory, and nip it with scissors. The rubber separates into rubber-band wide "legs." This works best if the rubber strip is tied on the jig "backwards," so that the strip extends over the head of the jig. When finished, the rubber band legs drape back in the normal position, making a lively lure in the water.

When tying crappie jigs, maribou feathers are often used instead of bucktail. Another material, chenille, (French for caterpillar) is used in connection with maribou. The chenille looks like wooly yarn. The maribou is tied to the jig and the tied ends are over-wrapped with chenille to cover the thread.

On shad darts, where very short dressings are required, calf tail is preferred over bucktail.

In finishing lures, I often paint a strip of cement on a well dried jig head and then roll it in silver glitter. The effect is appealing to fish. Flourescent red and chartreuse paints are effective on shad darts and crappie jigs.

Your color combinations and dressings are limited only by your imagination. Give jig making a try. I'll bet you'll like it.—*Jack Randolph*

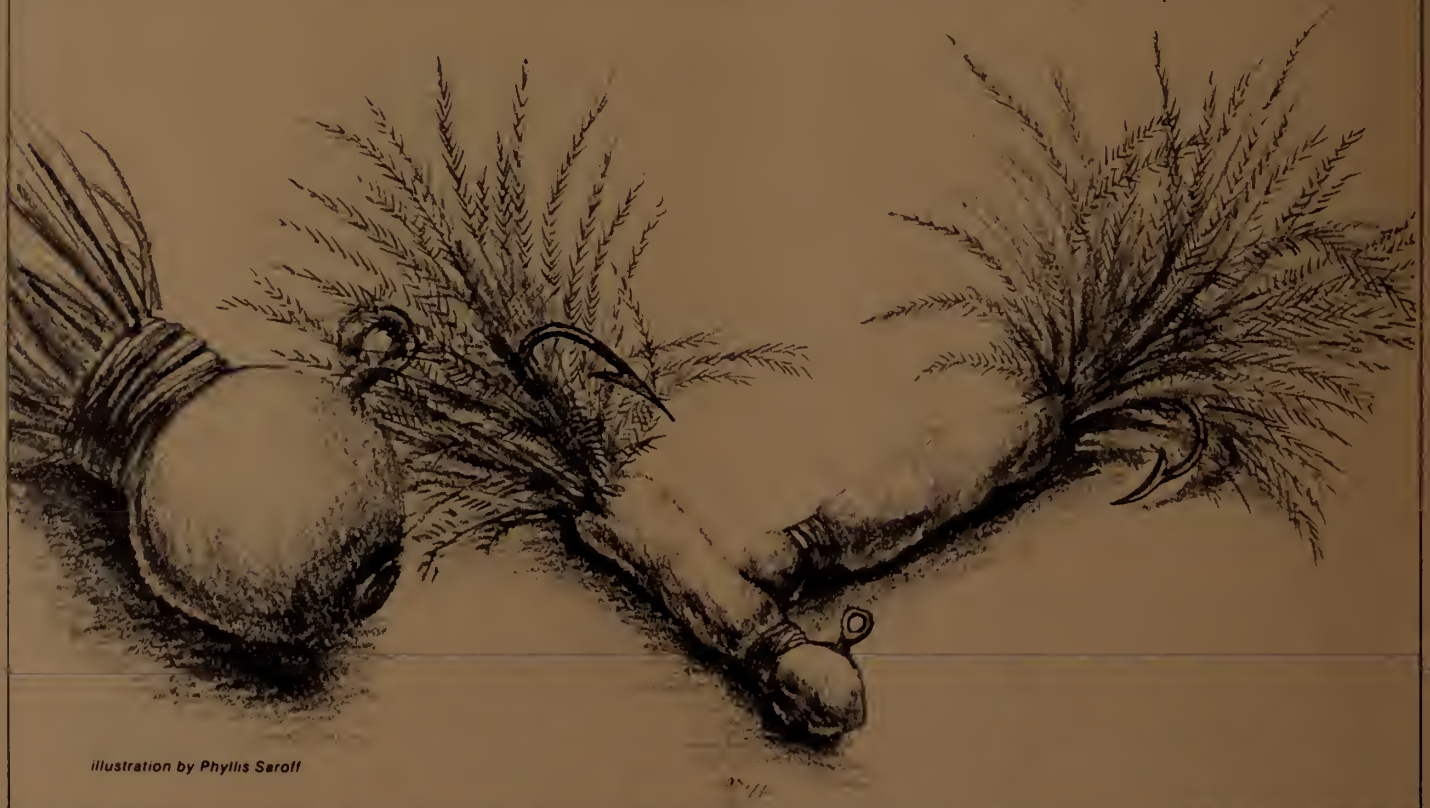


illustration by Phyllis Saroff

Mending Fishing Rods

"Can you fix it?" asked the lad, offering me his shattered fly rod. It was broken in two pieces just forward of the handle.

"We'll give it a try," I replied. "I think we can make it as good as new."

That conversation took place several years ago and last time I checked the old fly rod was still bringing them in.

When a fiberglass rod is broken, it doesn't have to be a total loss. If you are willing to put up with a little stiffness at the point of the break, you can fix it easily. All you need is an old piece of fishing rod and some good epoxy glue.

To repair it, cut a piece of rod material out of the old rod that will fit inside the broken rod, with about two inches of the old rod on either side of the break. Care must be taken in cutting the section out of the old rod to insure a proper fit.

illustration by Phyllis Saroff

If the break is in a tip section, you may be able to sweat off the ferrule and slip the piece of rod up to the point of the break. If you can, try it once without epoxy to see if it fits, remove it and coat it with epoxy and push it into position. Be sure that about two inches of the repair splint sticks out to accomodate the other section. Then coat the protuding end with epoxy and slip the other broken piece over it, making sure it is perfectly aligned and matches the break exactly. Immediately place a wrapping of thread over the break, starting two inches above the break and ending two inches below it. Place three coats of color preserver on the thread, waiting for each coat to dry before applying the next. Finally, cover the wrapping with an epoxy rod finish.

If you can't sweat off a ferrule, the splint can usually be inserted at the point of the break if you work carefully. Check it once without epoxy and then coat the splint with epoxy and insert it and finish as described above. When the job is finished, the repaired section will be the strongest section of the fishing rod.—*Jack Randolph*

Rubber Band Holds Bobber in Place

John Sellers, who has guided crappie fishermen on the big Santee Cooper Lakes in South Carolina for over 20 years, prefers live minnows for the jumbo fish the twin lakes are noted for. He also likes sturdy tackle for crappie that frequently top the three-pound mark, and his rig consists of a sliding bobber, a 1-ounce clinch-on sinker, a size 1/0 or 2/0 hook, and 15- to 20-pound test monofilament line. He uses both spinning and casting tackle.

Depending upon whether he is fishing over brush, in deep water, or in the shallows, he may suspend the minnows anywhere from three to eight feet below the bobber. To keep the bobber in place he ties a section of ordinary rubber band around the monofilament at the desired depth. When cast the bobber rides below the knot, but it slides up the line to rest against it as the sinker takes the squirming minnows to the correct depth.

While Sellers can move the knot up and down the line with his fingers, it fits tight enough to prevent the bobber from slipping.—*Bob Gooch*

Endangered Fish Need Your Help!

When we think of endangered or threatened species, the animals that come to mind are the bald eagle, the Delmarva fox squirrel and other land-dwelling animals. The species that live in Virginia's waterways are usually forgotten by most, perhaps because they are not as easily seen or as appealing to the eye as the majestic eagle.

In Virginia's waterways, there are nine endangered mussels, one endangered fish (the shortnosed sturgeon), and three threatened species. There are 20 species proposed for this list.

The endangered molluscs are found in southwest Virginia. Although we may not think of them as attractive, they play an important role ecologically. Mussels serve as environmental indicators, warning us against severely polluting our waterways. Mussels store pollutants in their shells in the process of filtering pollutants out of the water as they feed.

The Non-Game Wildlife and Endangered Species Program is funded from contributions donated through the tax check-off program. Lines 20A on Form 760 and 10A on Form 760S of the state tax form allow citizens to donate all or part of their tax refund. Monies from this fund are being used for the study of these species. If you would like more information on the Non-Game Program or a booklet on Virginia's Endangered Species, write to: Non-Game Program, Virginia Game Commission, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, Virginia 23230.— *Susan Gilley*

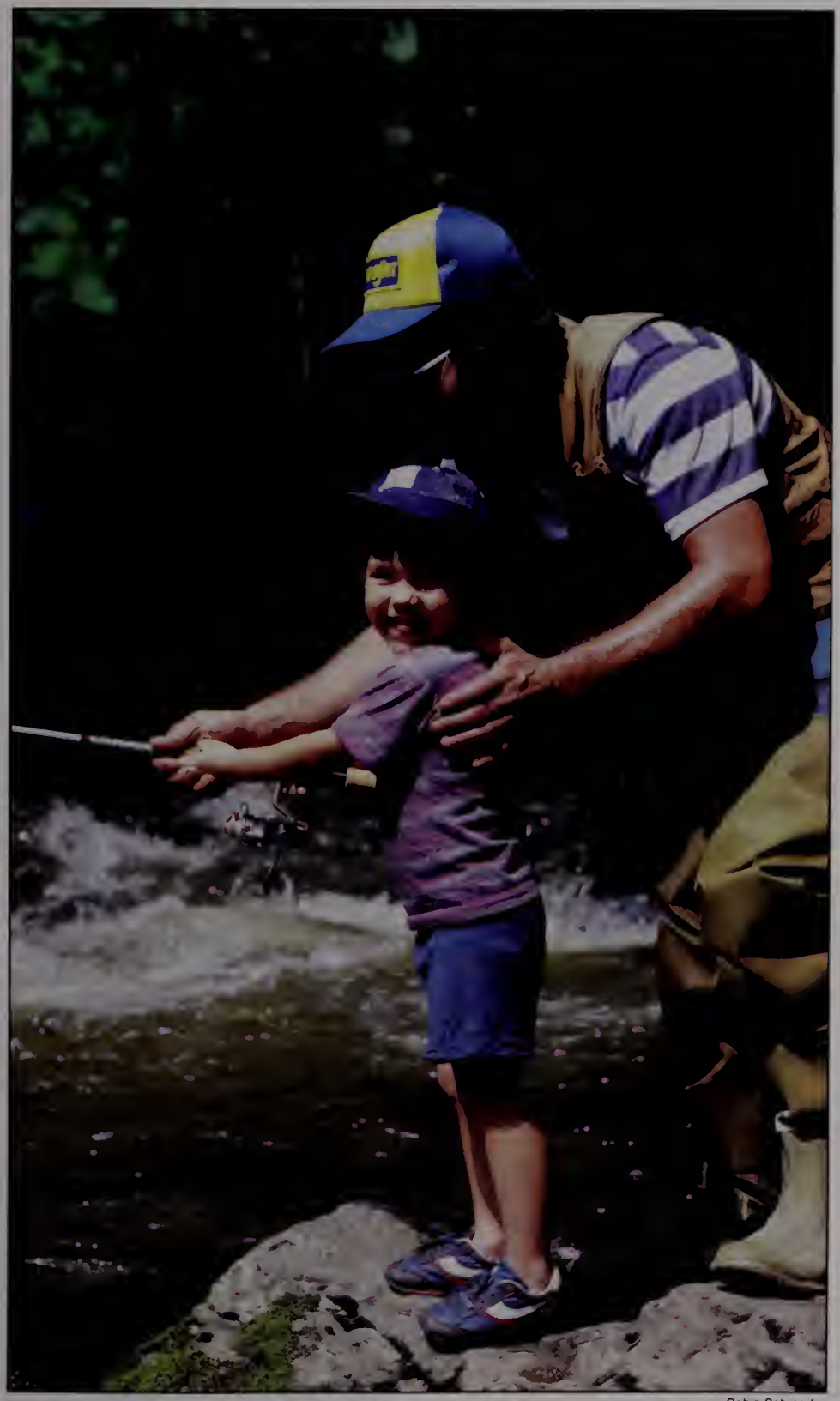
About the Authors

Charlie Sledd is the Game Commission's district fisheries biologist for the Richmond area. He is also a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve currently serving as Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Reserve Station Milford Haven in Mathews County. **Jack Randolph** is deputy assistant director of the Game Commission. One of his responsibilities is the weekly Outdoor Report. A freelance writer, he is a frequent contributor to *Virginia Wildlife* and numerous other publications. **Spike Knuth** is TV and motion picture producer for the Commission and also a familiar name to *Virginia Wildlife* readers. He is know for his regular monthly contribution of Bird of the Month and other feature articles. **Harry W. Murray**, proprietor of Murray's Fly Shop in Edinburg, is a fly fishing instructor. **Curtis J. Badger** is a writer for the *Eastern Shore News* in Onley. **Dan Shuber** is the Commission's assistant fisheries biologist for the Richmond area. **Gerald Almy**'s byline is familiar to readers of *Virginia Wildlife*, other state conservation magazines, and newstand favorites such as *Field and Stream, Southern Outdoors* and more. Almy is a resident of Woodstock. After you have read all the where and how to's, check out senior editor **Mel White**'s methods for cooking your catch.

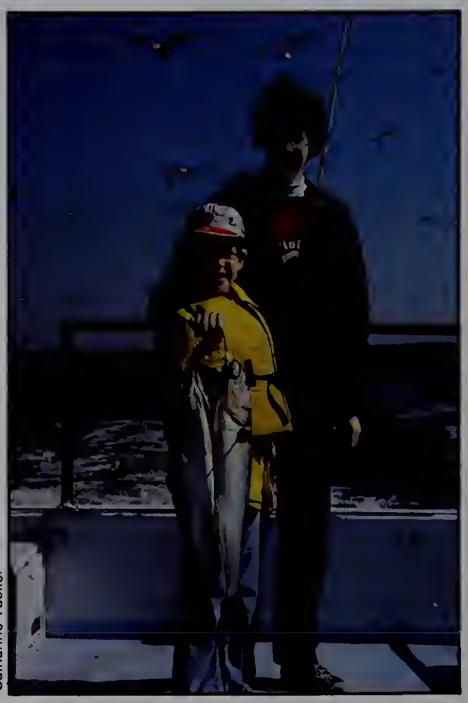
The ABC's of Fishing

An easy approach to teaching your child to fish.

by Paul C. Johnson



Robin Schroeder



Catharine Tucker

Sometimes the catch is big, sometimes it's small, and sometimes the only thing caught will be a pant's leg.

Spike Knuth

Catherine Tucker

Each year an estimated 40 million adults spend some time enjoying the sport of fishing. If they have children, the activity can be even more rewarding. However, teaching a child to fish properly can be a challenge.

Unfortunately, many youngsters come from one-parent families or from families where perhaps neither parent feels he or she is a knowledgeable fisherman. If you're one of these parents, don't let inexperience prevent you from taking your kid fishing. You certainly don't need to be a fishing expert to teach a child how to fish.

Buy simple, easy-to-use equipment. Spincast equipment is the easiest, most trouble-free gear around, and good spincast or "push-button" reels are available in the eight- to 15-dollar price range.

Select a fishing rod which is lightweight, limber, and rugged enough to survive being stepped on and slammed in car doors, but flexible enough to bend freely when you shake it in the store. A surprising number of good rods are priced from eight to 15 dollars.

The third item you'll need, and perhaps the most important, is your fishing line. It connects you (via the rod and reel) to the fish. It's been repeatedly proven that beginning fishermen, especially kids, entice the largest fish in the lake to bite. Usually it's something nearly impossible to unhook, like a 50-pound catfish. You can defy such equipment-busting lunkers by using a good quality nylon monofilament fishing line. Buying a premium quality line is your best insurance for minimizing the tangles and hassles beginning fishermen experience.

Once you have these three basic items, all that's needed to round out your fish catching system is a couple of bobbers (1-1½" diameter), some sinkers (⅛-½ oz. size), a package or two of snelled hooks (sizes 6-10), some bait, and a few suitably cooperative fish.

There are a million ways to attach hooks, sinkers and bobbers to your line. One way is to attach the weight to the end of your line, add a snelled hook (a hook with a six-inch piece of line attached) one foot above the weight, and put a bobber one to six feet above the hook. Start with the bobber at about one foot above the hook, and if after a few minutes of fishing you haven't caught anything, adjust the bobber deeper at one foot intervals until you've reached about six feet. If that doesn't work, take the bobber off, cast out, and fish on the bottom. When bottom fishing, hold the line between your fingers to feel bites, or keeping a taut line, prop your rod in a forked stick and wait for the tip to jiggle indicating a bite.

Young anglers should be started out on fish that are abundant, and which bite readily, such as bluegill, sunfish, crappie, and catfish. These fish are especially numerous when they gather to spawn. The size of fish you catch isn't important, and catching 10 bluegills is more fun (and more nutritional) than catching one small bass. The best places to fish are small, uncrowded waters close to home. Search for fish in the shallows, around docks, rocky spots, weedy shore areas, where trees overhang the water, or where submerged trees, brush or other shade is found. Contrary to the practice of many beginning anglers, fish are not found in trees or on telephone wires.

Worms (nightcrawlers), crickets and wigglers are available at most bait stores and will catch an endless variety of fish. Or, you can send Junior out near home to find grasshoppers, or other small critters that scurry about where kids play. This'll keep him or her busy the day before you go fishing, too.

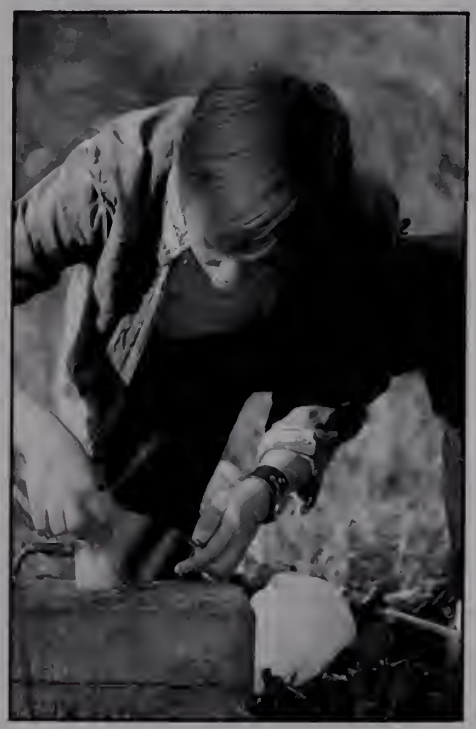
When fishing with a young person, patience is the most important ingredient. Tangled lines, hooks in shirttails, bobbers dangling from trees, impossibly hooked fish, wet feet, and jumbled equipment are commonplace.

When the fishing action is slow, it's important to let a child romp in the weeds or skip rocks across the water, or catch salamanders, or do any of the 101 other things kids do around water.

Make your first few fishing trips short and interesting. Fish in places that have lots of fish, and don't feel too bad when your young partner catches the biggest fish. It's always so. □

This article is provided courtesy of Berkley and Company, makers of TRILENE line.

Before long your child will be baiting his or her own hook with skill.



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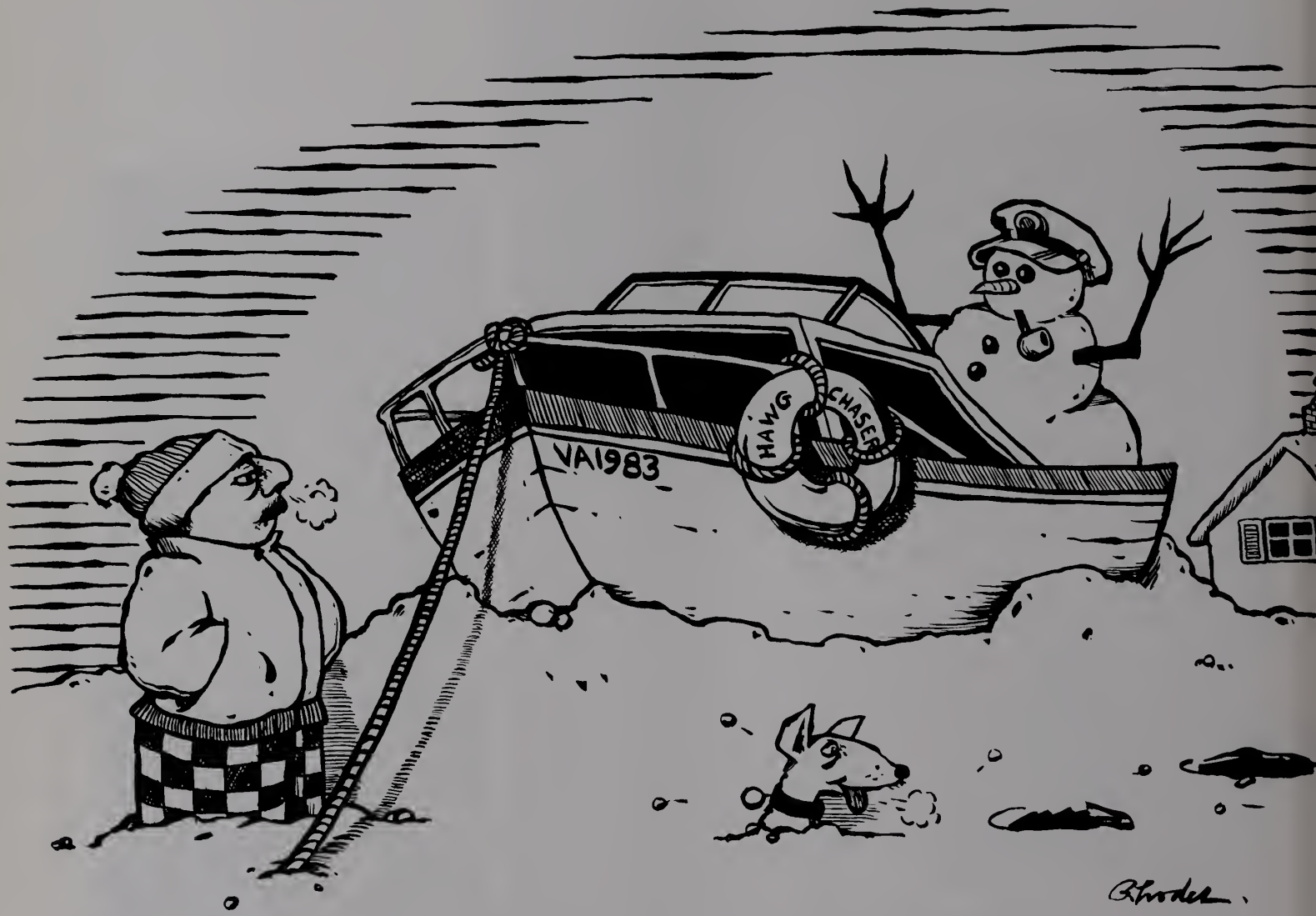


WATCH OUT, FISH!

Make sure your boat's spring fishing debut isn't marred by mechanical problems due to lack of preparation.

by Charlie Sledd

illustrations by Martin Rhodes

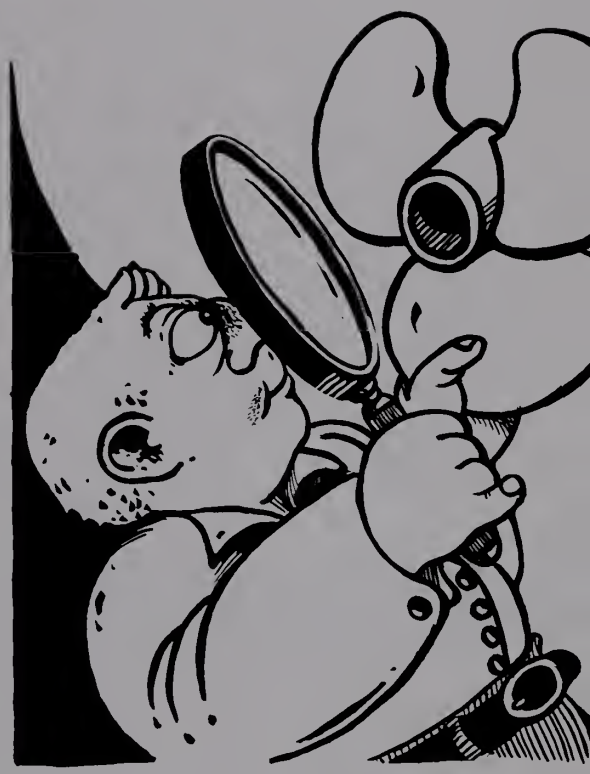
"Watch out, fish!"

How many times have you uttered those famous words, only to have that special fishing trip cancelled or delayed. . . not because the boss said you had to work or your spouse had planned a shopping spree, but because you neglected giving your boat and related equipment a thorough maintenance examination. While many fishermen continue to enjoy their favorite pastime throughout the winter months, many of us park old "Hawg-Chaser" in the backyard, inclined to believe that sub-freezing temperatures and fishing mix about as well as oil and water. For those who continue to fish during the winter, maintenance is an ongoing procedure. But for those of us who huddle close to the woodstove from December to February, boat care may be just food for thought with no immediate action. So before the fish really start biting, now is the time to make "Bass-Buster" shipshape for the upcoming season.

A thorough maintenance program will give attention to the boat, trailer, propulsion machinery, and all related safe boating equipment. Although many of the items in a maintenance program should be done before the boat is laid to rest for the winter, if you neglected to properly winterize your watercraft you should address those areas before launching into a new boating season.

Let's begin with the boat. Perform a thorough interior clean-up. Give your boat a good wash job and apply a coat of wax as extra protection. Check the entire electrical system for frayed wires and loose connections. Streering controls should be well lubricated. Make sure the battery is fully charged, not only the main electrical system unit but also those used for trolling motors. Clean the terminals and cable connections and apply a light coat of grease to help prevent corrosion. Fuel tanks should be drained and refilled with fresh gasoline. Deck hardware and other metal attachments should be sprayed with a moisture retardant to prevent excessive corrosion.

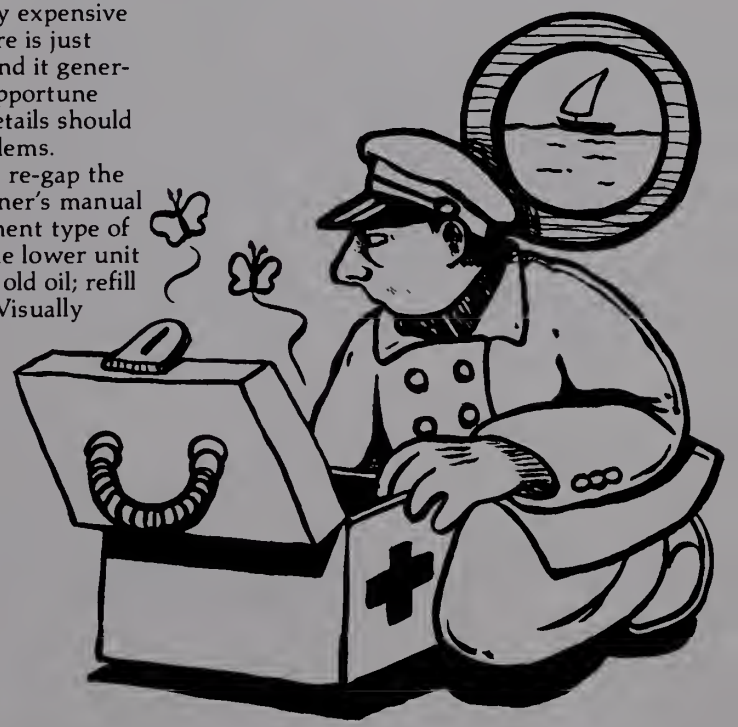
Let's move on to trailer maintenance. Examine all rollers, bunk pads and hinge mechanisms for excessive wear. Check your winch rope for wear and deterioration and spray the winch itself with moisture retardant. Boat straps and other tie-down devices should be inspected for wear. Wheel bearings should be cleaned and repacked. Maintain recommended tire pressure—even in the spare! Check all light wiring, bulbs and connections. A nice addition to any trailer is either dry launch lights or the necessary adjustments to raise the location of the lights. Until I made these adjustments, it seemed that my trailer lights didn't work most of the time. Corroded bulb holders were generally to blame. Inspect the hitch safety chains for wear or deterioration. Apply a light coat of grease on the hitch ball. Remember to keep your trailer inspection, if needed, and your license tags valid.



Aside from being awfully expensive to repair, boat engine failure is just down right aggravating. And it generally occurs at the most inopportune time. Attention to a few details should prevent many engine problems. Remove, inspect, clean and re-gap the spark plugs. Check the owner's manual for recommended replacement type of defective plugs. Remove the lower unit drain plugs and let out the old oil; refill with fresh gear lubricant. Visually

"Visually inspect the prop for slight nicks and dings.

Have you replaced those items used last season from your first aid kit?"



inspect the prop for slight nicks and dings. If the prop is excessively damaged, replace it for greater engine performance. Check the prop shaft for monofilament fishing line which can damage the lower seal. If your motor has a power trim unit, check the level of fluid in the reservoir and refill with recommended lubricant. Immediately upon placing the engine in service for the first time each season, check the operation of the water pump by observing the presence of the tell-tale overboard discharge.

The final area of preventive maintenance applies to safe boating equipment. Many of these items are required by federal regulation while others are carried only as precautionary measures. Since boating equipment requirements are based on the class and construction of your vessel, consult the appropriate literature available from the U.S. Coast Guard to determine what your boat needs. If you're required to have the following items, include them in your pre-season inspection program. Personal floatation devices (PFD's) must be U.S. Coast Guard approved, in good serviceable condition and of appropriate size for the wearer. When the boat is underway, these must be readily accessible. An approved throwable device must be in good serviceable condition. Fire extinguishers must be Coast Guard approved and well charged. For these dry powder types which are often mounted upright in a bracket, remove the extinguisher, invert, and hit the bottom with a few soft blows of the hand. This will help to unpack the contents which often compact due to boating activity in rough water. Sound producing devices must be operable; carry a mouth whistle as a back-up for mechanical devices which always seem to fail during boat inspections. Are your boat numbers adequately displayed and properly spaced? Be sure that your certificate of number is valid and remember that it must be carried aboard your vessel during periods of operation. Boat registrations are renewed through the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104 or 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230. If your boat is equipped with an inboard/outboard engine, check the backfire flame arrestor to insure that it is clean and tightly secured. Cleaning is best done using warm soapy water—never use any petroleum solvents to clean this device. Inspect the proper functioning of bow and stern lights. Are the ventilation ducts to and from the engine spaces clear of debris and securely attached to the deck cowls? Visual distress signalling devices should be serviceable and of the appropriate type for your hours of operation. Additional information is available from Fifth Coast Guard District, Portsmouth, Virginia 23705. Have you replaced those items used last season from your first aid kit? How old are those flashlight or lantern batteries? Has a four-year-old munchkin been playing in your boat tool kit and now it contains only a hammer and an extra large screwdriver?

Although this sounds like a lot of work, most of it can be accomplished on a couple of weekend days: the waning days of winter provide an excellent opportunity. (Keeps you away from all the "honey-do" chores.)

Now, where did I put the boat plug? Guess I'd better get a new fishing license, too. □

Fire extinguishers and personal floatation devices must be Coast Guard approved.

Never assume your boat tool kit still contains all the things you had in it at the end of last season.

The Lure of Wood & Steel

Looking more like a lure than a fish, the old wooden plugs will still sink their teeth into the big ones.

by Jack Randolph

photos by Robin Schroeder and Mel White

T A C

Lucky 13
Zaragossa

Heddon Vamp
Jitterbug

Once upon a time, most good bass lures were made of wood, weighed five-eighths of an ounce and were armed with hooks you could put some muscle to. When a bass saw one of those babies he knew he was about to get a full meal, and the beauty of it all was that a good plug only cost a few cents one side or the other of a dollar bill.

Many old bass men rue the day the boys with the slide rules in the tackle companies decided that they could make the same plugs better and cheaper using plastics. Many claim, with more than a little justification, that they sure made them cheaper, but they didn't make them better.

Certainly, the old lures weren't as pretty or lifelike as the newer lures. They are making some baits so realistic today that a few end up gettin' fried right along with the rest of the fish. But, is all this true-to-the-last-scale realism necessary? I think not. Look in your tackle box. Sure you have some baits that look more like a shad than a shad, but look at those spinner baits. What fish do they look exactly like?

No one can doubt that the old plugs caught fish; in fact,

Arbogaster Daredevle

Crazy Crawler Mepps Spinner

they still do. Not long ago I reached down into the tackle box, passing by a school of modern artificial minnows, to tie on an ancient, wooden Heddon Lucky 13. A combination top water and shallow running lure, this bait has been a favorite for generations. As likely as not, the bass that I was fishing for had never seen the bait before, but when they did they liked it. In less than two hours of mid-day fishing, I had four bass in the three- to five-pound class and a 10-pound channel cat that had me thinking citation bass for awhile.

Probably the most respected bass plug ever used in Virginia's waters is the Heddon Vamp, made from wood. Made in straight and broken back versions, the straight job was preferred. I say "was" because wooden Vamps are hard to come by these days, but I have four originals stored against the day I'll need them.

Most bassers favored the Vamp in the yellow perch or pike finish. It had a big side-to-side action that is not duplicated by any modern lures with which I am familiar. It is a great lure to play with, to change the speed of

retrieve or to twitch the rod tip to get a little different action. Bass loved it then, and they still do. I believe the Vamp probably was responsible for breaking more Chickahominy jackpots than any other bait, until plastic worms came along.

"Walking the Dog" was a term we used to use when fishing the old, wooden Heddon Zaragossa. I have one of these babies that proudly carries the jaw print of a huge pickerel that blasted in while fishing Sunken Meadow Pond some years ago. You don't see the Zaragossa around much anymore. The modern version is called the Zara Spook. It's a pretty good bait, but it ain't a Zaragossa.

The Zaragossa is a "stick bait," one that stands on end on the surface. With little educated rod twitching you could make that bait do a dance that would do in any bass or pickerel lurking nearby. Not only were these baits effective, they were fun to fish, too.

When I was a lad I remember seeing pictures of tremendous catches of bass in full page ads in the outdoor magazines. The first one I remember featured the Jitterbug, an immortal lure that is still available on the tackle shelves in living plastic. One wooden one still does the job for this ol' boy. It's been painted and rearmed with hooks a dozen times but it still gets 'em.

Arbogast's Jitterbug took bass fishing by storm when it first appeared and for decades it has remained one of the top bass-getters in the business. The Jitterbug is a "walker" type of top water bait, one that swims across the surface emitting a tantalizing gurgling sound. You needed a bit of open water to fish it.

For tight places Arbogast offered the Hula Popper, a top water popping lure with a rubber or plastic skirt. This is a "worker" type lure, one that you could cast into a little opening and, with some practice, make that bait work without moving. It still ranks as one of the best baits for close work next to those cypress trunks.

One of the craziest fishing lures ever made ranks with the best of them and was aptly named the Crazy Crawler by Heddon. With two little paddle-like arms this lure swims across the surface like a miniature Olympian doing the Australian crawl. A "walker" type top water bait, it ranks right along with the Jitterbug as an all-time great.

Once some years ago, when I returned home after a lengthy overseas tour with the Army, I was dismayed to discover that conventional tackle had been eclipsed by spinning, bamboo rods by glass and my old faithful wooden pikie minnows with an array of new plastic baits of various descriptions. Time nor finances did not offer me the opportunity to re-tool, but I was surprised to discover that the fish hadn't changed, only the fishermen. Those striped bass greeted my wooden, snook-size, silver flash finish pikie minnows like long lost friends. The pikie, preferably the wooden model, still ranks among striped bass men as the best plug ever to fool a striper in salt water.

For shallow water fishing, few lures are the equal of the old Creek Chub Darter. This bait is simplicity itself. It has no metal mouthpiece or fancy gadgetry. The mouthpiece is carved into the body. In capable hands this lure could be made to act like a frightened minnow scurrying for its life. It still can.

One of the all-time great baits was made of metal, not wood. This lure has established itself so well that any red and white spoon is called a Dardevle. But every red and white spoon is not a Daredevle. The real McCoy is generally heavier and produces an action all its own. I like to remove the treble hooks, using a set of double hooks instead. On the split ring that holds the hooks to the body I place a snap. By cutting about an inch off the top end of a strip of bass-size pork rind and placing it in this snap instead of hooking it on a hook, I get a better action from the lure and miss fewer strikes. I still rank the Daredevle as one of the best fall lures for bass and pickerel.

Back Bay is the Johnson Silver Minnow capital of Virginia. The Silver Minnow was made for weeds and Back Bay has them. It also has a population of bass that is right impressed with this bait.

The Silver Minnow has been around as long as I can remember. The secret in its longevity, of course, is in its effectiveness. Some anglers shy away from baits equipped with weedguards, thinking that weedless lures are also fishless, but this isn't so. Today's sophisticated fishermen have learned the value of weedguards. Properly adjusted, they keep the weeds off and do a very good job of hooking fish.

The lures mentioned so far are mostly pre-World War II creations. Following the war, a few baits came along that have earned permanent spots in many tackle boxes. Certainly we can honor plastic worms in this manner, but so much has been written about them that we'll move on to the great Mepps Spinner.

The Mepps in all of its sizes and shapes has proven it is here to stay. In the smaller sizes, it is great on trout in streams and lakes. Panfish such as perch, bream and crappie often hit them with gusto. In the medium sizes, the Mepps is a favored bass lure, and the bigger models are alluring to northern pike and muskies.

Last, but certainly not least of this array of fine lures is another import, the Rapala. There are other versions of this lure made of plastic, but it is tough to beat the original Finnish balsa wood creation. It was Rapala that first proved great lures can be made of balsa wood and his were really the first that came close to offering artificial lures that looked very much like the baitfish they were intended to imitate.

Certainly there have been some excellent lures created since these old timers hit the marketplace. Some of the new plastic lures as well as some great American balsa wood creations rank among the most beautiful and effective lures ever made, but the old ones were good, too.

If you are lucky enough to have some of these old babies around, dig them out and give them a try. It just could be that a bass wary of a modern buzz bait would clobber a Jitterbug; or bass tired at looking at modern deep-runners may take a fancy to an Arbogaster. Remember, those bass out there belong to the young generation. The old plugs of yesteryear are new to them, too. □

At first, it hardly seemed like ideal crappie water. The river was roiled and muddy with recent spring rains, and the wet, muddy marks on stumps and trees a few inches above present water levels indicated that it was tidal water. The shoreline was thick with hardwoods, brush and greenbrier, sprinkled with holly and laurel. Numerous blowdowns and brush piles in and along the river's edge were the first hints that crappies might be present. No matter what the water type, submerged brush is the common denominator for good crappie water. Some of the longer branches waved and bobbed in the current as the tide began to roll back seaward.

Morris Creek, located in Charles City County, is a tributary of the Chickahominy River. It forms much of the southern boundary of the Game Commission's Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area which is bordered on the east by the Chickahominy River and on the west by state road 623; it is just north of Highway 5. Large tidal rivers like the Chickahominy, Potomac, James, Rappahannock, Mattaponi and Pamunkey—which form the York—are well-known and rich in history as well as game and fish. What many people don't realize is that many of the small tributaries of these big rivers are almost as productive. Local anglers know, for example, that Morris Creek is a good stream for largemouth as well as channel catfish and crappie.

It was crappie that David Brime (known as "Bubba") and I were after as we wormed our way up through muddy-edged channels, avoiding blowdowns and submerged logs and brush. There is something fascinating about these brackish water tidal creeks, even when merely following their snake-like paths on a map. Your first trip up a tidal creek may be reminiscent of a jungle movie you saw as a child; you remember explorers probing the mysterious depths of a jungle river as it winds through the wilderness. The surroundings of the tidal creek seem to put you closer in touch with nature. Generally most tidal creeks are surrounded or bordered by tidal marsh and away from the usual noises of civilization. There is something calming and relaxing in a stillness disturbed only by birds and running water. Even the slow-idling outboard doesn't affect the mood. Each bend produces a new sight, such as a pair of wood ducks jumping from a backwater gut, or a great blue heron startled, squawking, into flight.

In the case of Morris Creek, there is a unique blend of habitat types. In addition to the surrounding tidal marsh, ridges of high ground extend to the creek in places. The steep banks are studded with stands of oak, beech and other hardwoods, as well as laurel, holly, cedar and pine. At water's edge were gum, sycamore and in the water, big bulging cypress trunks climbed skyward surrounded by cypress knees—adding to the good fish cover.

David Brime is the Wildlife Management Area Supervisor and knows the creek. Experience helped him

Morris Creek Crappies

Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area provides plenty of action, if you know how to handle a tidal creek.

by Carl "Spike" Knuth

choose some "honey holes" for us to fish that day. On our first stop we pulled up to a steep bank and tied up to an old blowdown. The bank was on a finger or ridge of land on an outer bend of the creek. The current and tide had cut a deep hole and undercut the bank, which was enchanced by submerged brush and fallen trees. Bubba baited up with a small fathead minnow on a spincast rod rigged with a bobber and dropped it in close to the sumberged branches. He picked a small feathered jig for his spinning rod while I decided to try a Falls Jigging Minnow—a rubber minnow with a round, fire-orange head. Bubba's minnows enticed two fat crappies to the boat before I got a hit. It was simple fishing. Often we only reached out as far as arm and rod would reach, dropped the lure in close to the logs, branches or brush and jigged the lure up or down or side to side.

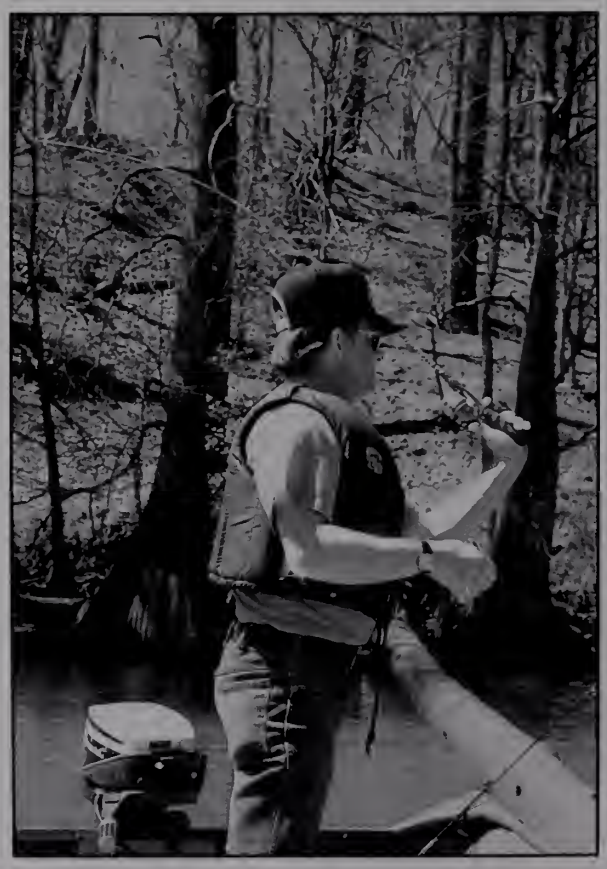
The crappies we were catching ranged in size from 10 to 14 inches. They appeared to be in excellent condition—broad across the back when looking at them from the top. I've caught crappies from some private ponds that were platter-size but were just as thin which means they weren't getting enough to eat. Morris Creek crappies apparently get plenty to eat!

We untied when the action slowed and moved upstream. One by one, we stopped and fished at Bubba's favorite spots. We'd add two or three fish to the bucket at each spot, occasionally picking up a bluegill as well. We fished right up against some cypress trunks in one calm, deep stretch of creek and picked up a couple of fat crappies. We were catching black crappies, the males showing black bellies and chins, the female's silvery white bellies burgeoning with eggs. We stopped at another brush-filled hole and picked up three more as our bucket began to fill.

Most of the best spots were on the outer bends where crappies laid in scoured-out holes under logs and brush. Other good spots were located where smaller creeks entered the main creek. In all cases, however, the common denominator was brushy, woody cover. Each time we nosed up into the brush to tie up, I instinctively scanned the branches for snakes. Cottonmouths are present here, but most snakes are nonpoisonous water snakes.

We worked live minnows and feathered, weighted jigs, beetle-spins, and spinner-bucktails in and around underwater tangles. We found that we had to work them in close and slowly. The crappies were biting very tentatively—they seemed sluggish. It was as if we had to drop the lures right in their "faces"—probably due to poor visibility in the muddy water.

We started back downstream and tied up to a big, weather-beaten, water-scoured old tree trunk that lay perpendicular to the shore. Bubba tied into two more 13-inchers and lost what we thought might have been a big

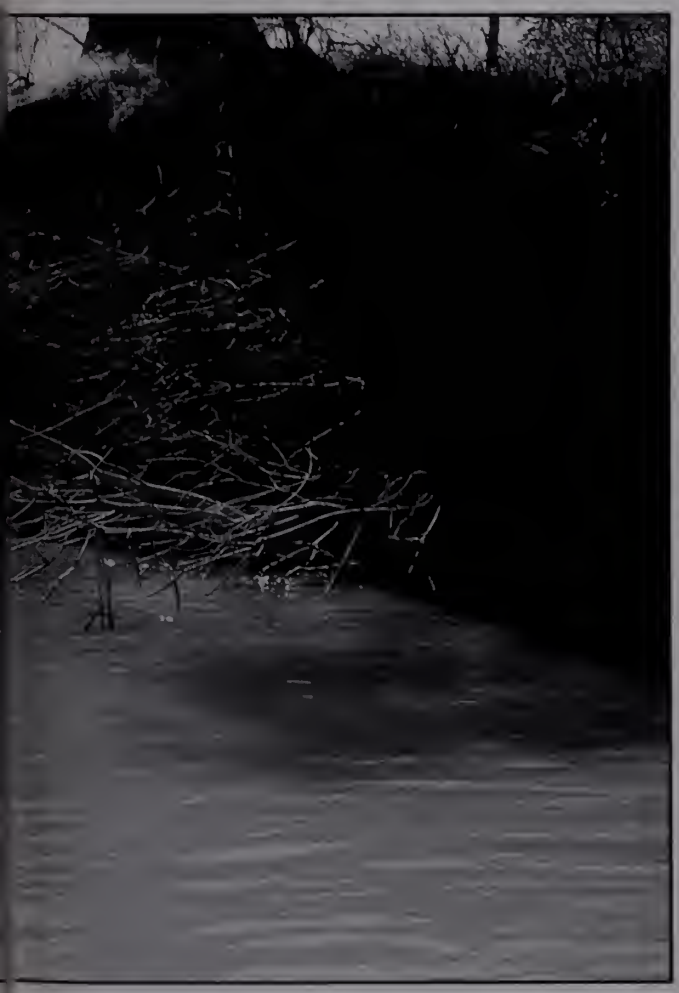


bass. I got a good hit and had a good fight with what I thought was a bass, but it turned out to be a 2½-pound channel cat. We continued downriver to a spot near a lone, scraggy cypress. We didn't know it at first, but a pair of kingbirds watched us quietly until we got too close to their nest. They chattered and scolded until we left. A kingfisher's rattling call echoed off the high bank on the opposite side as he made the rounds of his own favorite fishing holes.

We headed for the last "honey hole"—a bent tree with its crown half in the water. Bubba motored in quickly and I was about to grab some branches to stop us when Bubba yelled "Don't touch it!" I pulled my hands back and saw a virtual tree full of snakes—a big mama and her babies. The boat snagged one branch, pushing it into a tight bend, so that when it released, it catapulted three or four of the snakes right over the boat, almost hitting Bubba. That little spot is now not-so-affectionately known as "snake tree point."

For those who would like to fish Morris Creek or other tidal creeks, don't let the snakes scare you. However, beware of grabbing into shoreline brush or running the boat into or under shoreline vegetation. The Game Commission's Lands and Engineering Division has built a good launch ramp and dock on Morris Creek within the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area in cooperation with the Game Division. It is capable of handling some good sized boats, but if you are planning to fish upstream, johnboats or smaller bass boats up to 16 feet or so are advisable. If you are not familiar with tidal action, it may be a good idea to scout out the creek during low tide. This way you can learn where the main channel is and where the various mudflats, obstructions and other hazards are. Running aground during a fast-falling tide can be a miserable experience at best. Actually, a low tide is an opportunity to learn where crappies may be holed up by checking out deep holes and structures. Bubba's neighbor, Sam Kitchen, regularly fishes the low tide because he can find the sheltered holes. Bubba prefers high tide saying he has better luck then. Apparently the crappies aren't fussy about which tide they bite on! The best months for crappies are mid-April through June and late October to early December.

As far as proper tackle, use light to medium spincast or spinning gear, at least eight pound test line—you'll be pulling out of snags a lot—and live minnows. Small cane poles are effective, too. If you prefer artificials, various jigs and spinner combinations work best. Use enough split shot to keep live minnows down in the current or tide and fish your artificials close to banks, stumps, branches and brush. Most of all, enjoy the sights and sounds of a tidal creek as you seek Morris Creek crappies. □



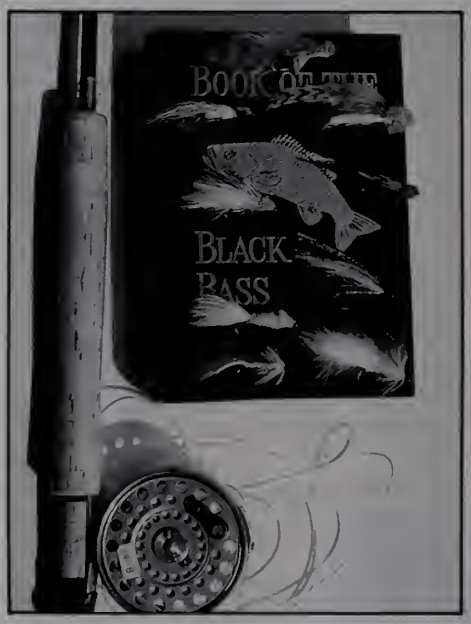
"We worked live minnows and feathered, weighted jigs, beetle-spins, and spinner-bucktails in and around underwater tangles."

Fly Fishing Tackle: A Primer

Last summer while guiding an angler on one of our small mountain brook trout streams, I realized the importance of proper tackle selection. The stream was typical of many of Virginia's beautiful little headwater streams. Most of the pools were from 10 to 15 feet long and the stream was seldom more than 15 feet wide. The ever-present tree limbs were usually only a few feet over our heads. The stream was already starting to get low but there was a good hatch of Mayflies and many trout were out on feeding stations taking the ginger-colored natural flies as they drifted down stream.

The stage was perfectly set for some excellent dry fly fishing. The situation called for a cautious approach and accurate fly placement. After spooking some of the trout in the first several pools, my companions quickly learned the importance of a cautious approach. Though the gentleman was an excellent caster with textbook form, he had trouble dropping his fly on the water where he wanted it. He simply could not hit the target. He took a few fish but realized he was not doing as well as he could have been if he were more accurate in casting his fly to the desired feeding areas. In one nice pool, he hung his first cast on a tree limb. Since I was pretty sure we had not spooked the pool, I suggested that he take my outfit and fish the pool while I held his out of the way. Using my fly rod he landed three beautiful brookies in that one pool. We moved on through the pool and I retrieved his fly. He asked if he could use my fly rod for a while. In the next four pools he caught and released nine trout with my outfit which held the same fly as his had. As he walked over to the side of the pool he said, "I cannot believe the accuracy I have with this rod. The fly just seems to go where I want it." Needless to say, he continued to use my rod the rest of the day.

What was the difference in the two rods? His fly rod was a stiff eight-foot graphite which required a number six line. This would be a good rod to use on the Beaverkill in New York for the open water and long cast needed there, but it did not have the accuracy and delicacy needed in the close quarters of Virginia's mountain streams. My fly rod was 7½ feet long and needed only a number four line to flex properly. This rod was designed to provide the delicacy and accuracy needed with only 10 to 15 feet of line beyond the tip—an ideal rod for Virginia mountains.



Beginning fly fishermen headed for Virginia streams should make their tackle selections carefully: first consider quarry and location, and take it from there.

Harry W. Murray

Later in the summer, I was guiding another angler on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River for smallmouth bass. The gentleman had driven across four states to get here. Unfortunately, when I picked him up at his motel the morning of our first trip, I did not check his tackle selection. As we arrived on the stream I could see several fish feeding on damsel flies around the grass beds. The river was getting very low and I knew the fish would be spooky. We would have to be very careful in our approach and use a longer than average cast in making our presentations to the bass to prevent spooking them.

I had my friend wade into the river well below the grass beds and work upstream toward the feeding bass. Unfortunately, just as he would get within casting distance of each of the hot spots the bass would stop feeding. Realizing he was putting them down with his approach, the angler tried staying further away and making longer casts. This still did not work. He just could not cast far enough to reach them. I realized this would never work so I waded up to him thinking he might do better in the riffles where the fish would be less spooky. As we stood there in the river discussing the situation I noticed for the first time he was using one of his beautiful bamboo trout fly rods. I had always been a great admirer of the old classic bamboo fly rod of the 30's and 40's and I asked if I could cast it. Instantly I realized why Sam could not reach the feeding bass. The rod was a seven-foot, delicately-tipped trout rod which required a number five line. Even though he had paid dearly for this masterpiece, it was no rod for this type of fishing. I explained this to him and suggested he try my fly rod. Bingo! He took four bass without moving from where we were standing. Again, I lost my rod for the day. Mine was a nine-foot graphite bass rod which Harry Wilson built especially for our bass fishing. It has a strong tip and balances perfectly with a weight forward eight bass bug taper fly

(Right) Brown Trout and the tackle you might use to snare it. (Facing page) Springtime in Virginia's mountains means fly fishing—perhaps with a dry trout fly such as the Royal Wulff—and stopping to admire the redbud and the dogwood.

line. This was the answer for the problem at hand.

With these two situations in mind it is easy to see that the selection of fly fishing tackle will be determined by the type of fishing we plan to do. The two main factors which should be closely examined are the size fly and the distance needed. My nine-foot, eight-weight bass outfit would never have presented a small, size 16 dry fly properly on the small trout stream. Conversely, my delicate 7½-foot, four-weight trout rod would never have turned over the large bass flies at the distances needed on the Shenandoah River.

Most fishermen considering fly fishing for the first time select the rod first and give little thought to the line and reel. This is backwards. The line is the most important factor to consider in assembling an outfit which will fill your needs. The size of the line will determine the capacity of your tackle to handle different size flies. Fly lines range from a number one which weighs 60 grains up to a number 12, which weighs 380 grains. This is the weight of the first 30 feet of the line. The lighter-weight lines will cast small flies well but do a poor job with heavy, wind-resistant flies. Heavier lines handle larger flies well but lack the delicacy needed for small flies at close casting distances.

After realizing the relationship between the line size and the flies you plan to use, it is apparent that you will need a delicate flexible rod to cast the light lines and a stiffer, more powerful rod to cast the heavy lines. The length and weight of the fly rod are determined by personal preference and the area to be fished. Even though there are some very delicate nine-foot rods which handle a number four line beautifully, this would be a poor choice for mountain trout fishing. The rod is delicate enough, but it is too long, considering all the tree limbs in the way.

Once the weight line and the matching fly rod are selected you must determine the type of line needed. A floating line should definitely be your first choice. After gaining some experience, you may want to add a sinking tip line. The taper of the line is a matter of preference. You may choose from a level, double taper or weight forward taper. Where delicacy is needed, the double taper is usually my first choice. The weight forward taper will provide greater distance and turn over large flies well, so it is the first choice for the bass fisherman. Level lines fall short in both of these areas but are less expensive than the tapered lines.

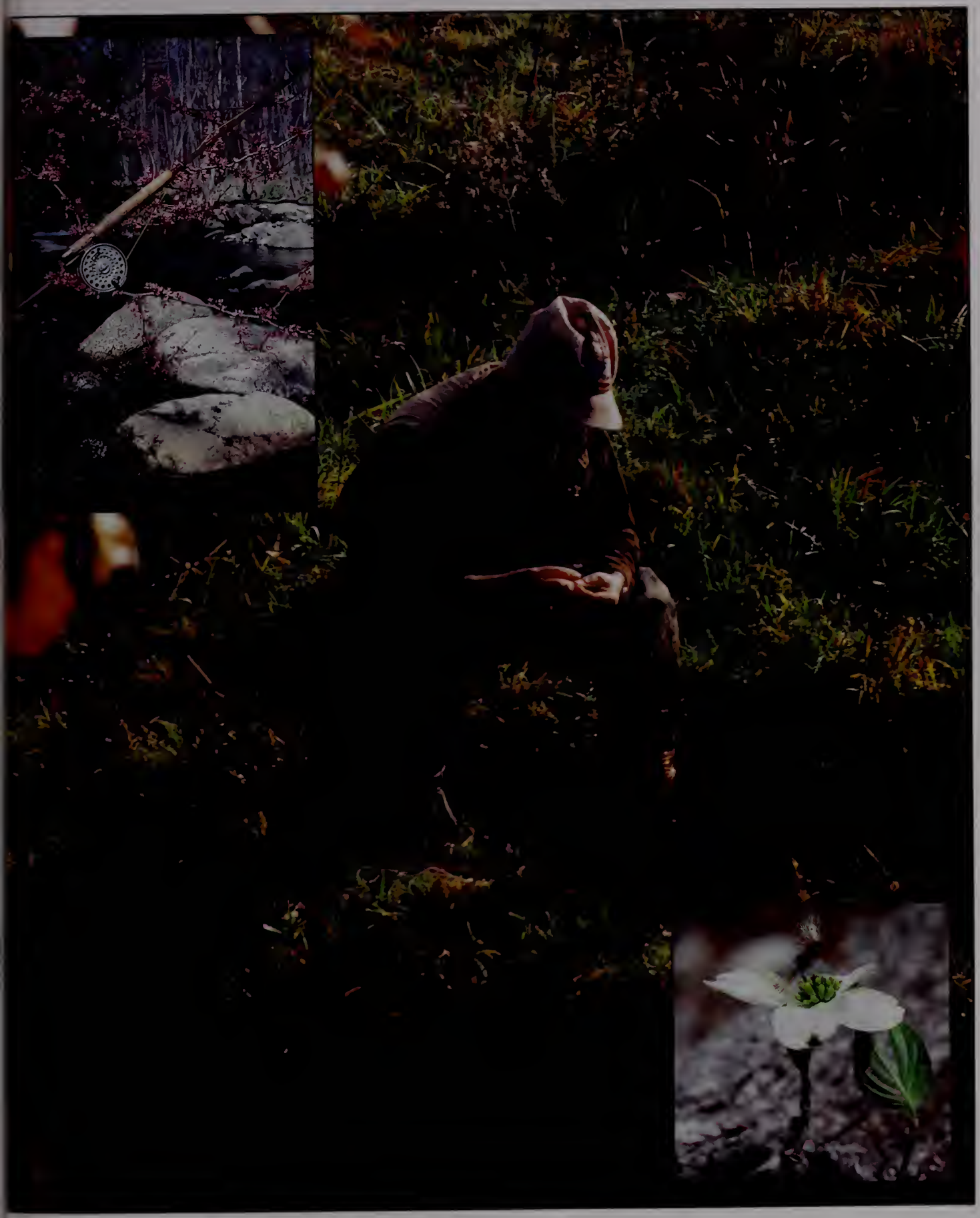
Most Virginia fly fishermen prefer a lightweight, single action fly reel. Dependable construction and adequate line capacity are the two main factors to consider here. Personal preference is a big factor in reel selection.

In my experience, the proper leader is almost as important as the correct line for Virginia fishing. I prefer a compound tapered knotted leader. Level leaders are very poor, and I have never found a knotless tapered leader which performs as well as a properly constructed knotted leader. I like my trout leaders about eight feet long and tapered down to 4x (4 lb), 5x (3 lb) and 6x (2 lb). For bass fishing, the eight foot leaders work well but they should be tapered down to 1x (8 lb) or 2x (7 lb).

To summarize this, let's chart three beginner's outfits for Virginia waters: one for the fellow interested only in trout, one strictly for the bass fisherman, and one which could be used for both bass and trout. By necessity this third outfit is a slight compromise for both trout and bass for the fellow who wants only one outfit it will do the job if he selects his flies properly. □

Outfitting Guidelines

FISH	ROD	LINE	REEL	LEADER
Trout	7½ ft.	DT 4F	Light Weight Single Action	8 ft. 4x, 5x, 6x
Bass	9 ft.	WF 8F	Light Weight Single Action	8 ft. 1x, 2x
Combination Trout & Bass	7½ ft.	WF 6F	Light Weight Single Action	8 ft. 2x, 3x, 4x



Spike Knuth

At least one flounder fisherman lays business aside to go a-fishin' once a week.

Closed Wednesdays

Here are his tips as well as those of other Eastern shore experts.

by Curtis J. Badger

Spike Knuth

This promises to be a banner year for flounder, in numbers if not in individual sizes.

On the door of Eddie Matthews' dry cleaning business is the following message: "Closed Wednesdays During Fishing Season."

People who live near the little Eastern Shore town of Tasley know that if they want their suits pressed, they had better see Eddie some time other than Wednesday, at least when the flounder are biting.

Eddie's sign goes up in late March and stays there until the fish stop biting, usually in late fall, depending upon the weather. Although there is no official "season" on flounder, local fishermen eagerly await word of the first catch, and a few hardy anglers engage in friendly competition to see who will bring the season's first flounder to the dock. Eddie and his wife Flora are usually among those braving the March weather for the chance to hook an early flounder.

"Last year Flora had me out there when it was almost cold enough to ice skate," Eddie says. "To make it worse, a Come-Here caught the first flounder." (A Come-Here is an Eastern Shore resident whose family has lived on the peninsula for fewer than four generations, more or less.)

Depending upon weather conditions, a flounder will be caught on the Eastern Shore in late March or early April, and the annual pilgrimage of flounder fishermen will begin. Pick-ups, camping vehicles, vans, and family station wagons, all towing boats and trailers, will form caravans in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, and they will flock to Eastern Shore towns such as Wachapreague, Chincoteague, Quinby and Cape Charles by the hundreds. That is one of the reasons Eddie prefers to fish on Wednesdays. He lives in Wachapreague, which deservedly calls itself the flounder capital of Virginia, and when the fishing is good, the weekend crowds can make a fishing trip more hectic than fun. So Eddie keeps his boat in a marina slip, avoiding the crowded ramps, and on a Wednesday afternoon he can leave the dock and be drifting for flounder in a matter of minutes.

Early in the season Eddie and other flounder fishermen will be drifting over the shallow bays and creeks that separate the mainland Eastern Shore from the ocean. "Early in the year, when the water temperature is still cool, the flounder are usually in the shallow water where the temperatures are a few degrees warmer. If the fish are there, you'll catch them drifting over these flats."

Standard bait for flounder fishing consists of a minnow and a strip of fresh squid, which are placed on the same hook. There is an ongoing debate over whether live minnows are more productive than the frozen variety. Most fishermen will voice a definite preference, but many experienced anglers will candidly admit that they are not sure it makes much difference. "I always fished the frozen minnows and had good luck with them," says Eddie. "But last year I switched to live minnows. I wasn't having problems with frozen minnows. It was just that I had run out and the only thing the bait shop

had was live ones. I really can't see the difference, especially if you're drifting with the tide and the minnow is moving a lot. I guess there could be an argument that a live minnow gives off a scent or sound that would attract fish, but I can't see much difference."

Another matter of debate is the terminal tackle. Some flounder fishermen swear by spinners and beads rigged near the hook. The glitter of the hardware, the reasoning goes, attracts fish, especially when water clarity is less than ideal.

Then there is the other school of thought. Says Eddie: "When water clarity is bad, after a northeast storm for example, there is a lot of slur in the water. The more hardware you use, the more you are going to stir up the slur." Eddie, obviously, is a proponent of undecorated terminal tackle. He uses a conventional two-hook top and bottom rig, no spinners and no beads.

The one point that nearly all fishermen can agree on is that the most popular bait for flounder is minnows and squid. There are times, however, when the fish will hit artificials. Lures such as Hopkins and Pet spoons are productive. And Frank Wojcik of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science tells of fishermen filling coolers with flounder last fall at Hatteras. They were fishing in the surf using shark belly, jigging the bait gently as it was retrieved.

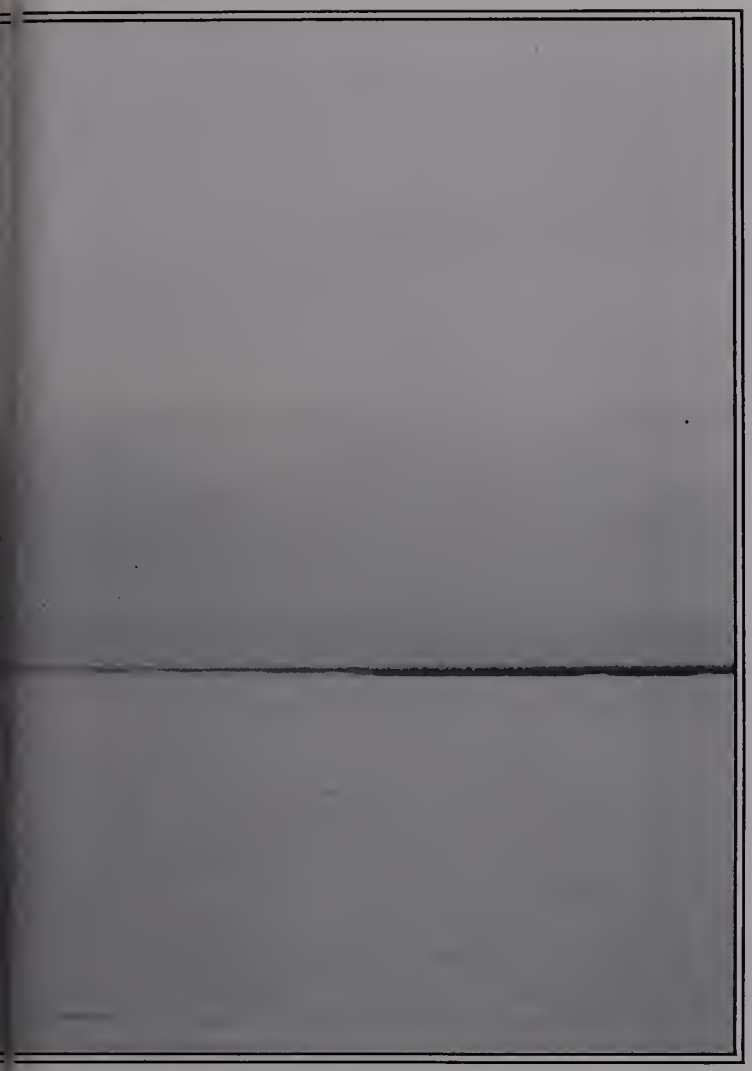
It's Going to Be a Tremendous Year

Frank, who conducts the annual trawler survey for VIMS, predicts that the 1983 flounder season is going to one of the best. "It looks like it's going to be a fabulous year. The fish are everywhere. Last fall in Carolina we were catching flounder like I've never seen before. The fish were small, about ten to twelve inches, but by this spring they should be in the 12- to 14-inch range."

He says they should be moving into Virginia waters in the spring, following schools of menhaden into the Chesapeake Bay. The fish should arrive on the seaside of Eastern Shore in April and in the Chesapeake and its tributaries in early May.

Another VIMS scientist, Dr. Herbert Austin of the department of fisheries, says scientists have recently found that there are two separate stocks of flounder that supply the Virginia fishery. The mid-Atlantic stock spawns in the fall about 50 to 100 miles off the New Jersey coast. A southern stock spawns off Cape Hatteras.

Dr. Ausitn says young flounder from the mid-Atlantic stock migrate into the Chesapeake Bay in early winter. They stay in the Bay until they are one to two years old, then they migrate northward in the spring, never to return to Virginia waters. The larger fish taken by local anglers are probably from the southern stock, he said. These fish spend the winter months off Carolina, then migrate into local waters in the spring.



"Early in the season Eddie and other flounder fishermen will be drifting over the shallow bays and creeks that separate the mainland Eastern Shore from the ocean."

Dr. Austin echoes Frank Wojcik's opinion that 1983 should be a banner year for flounder. Trawler samplings taken this winter in North Carolina indicate there is a large population of small flounder in the southern stock.

To sum up, look for plentiful catches of flounder in the one- to two-pound range, but don't expect to win many Virginia Salt Water Fishing Tournament citations. Minimum citation weight for flounder is seven pounds.

Lack of citation winners shouldn't worry too many fishermen, however, because flounder in the one- to two-pound class are considered the best size for eating. And after inconsistent catches over the past two years, dependable catches of one- and two-pounders would be welcome.

Generally, flounder fishing on the Eastern Shore seaside begins in April and is good until the weather warms. Then activity slacks off until the fall, when it picks up again. Last year flounder action got a spectacular start, then became virtually comotose in May and stayed that way through the summer. Action picked up only slightly in the fall. If the VIMS projections hold true, 1983 should mark a return to more memorable flounder seasons.

While flounder are not the most thrilling fish to catch—they lack the speed and spirit of weakfish and blues—they are near the top of most fishermen's lists of favorite inshore saltwater species. The reason is not hard to determine if you've ever eaten fresh flounder.

The fish has firm white meat that responds well to many methods of preparation. If you ask 10 fishermen their favorite flounder recipes, you will probably get 10 different answers. "The ideal flounder is a 10-incher (without head and tail), lightly dusted with flour, and fried," says our dry cleaning friend Eddie Matthews. Others prefer the fish baked, with potatoes and onions, served with a wedge or two of hot cornbread. Some like flounder broiled, basted lightly with butter and lemon juice. Another tasty method is to saute the fish and fresh mushrooms in butter, then remove fish and mushrooms and add one-quarter cup of white wine to the fry pan for a minute or so. Pour wine over the fish and devour.

I've never met a flounder I didn't like; I enjoy all the above. But if you really want to know the best way to prepare flounder, I'll tell you. You need a medium size fish, two pounds or so, with the backbone removed. Mix some backfin crabmeat with enough mayonnaise and butter to hold the concoction together, season it with salt, pepper, lemon juice or white wine, perhaps a little Old Bay, and generously scoop this mixture between the flounder filets. Use toothpicks or a reasonable facsimile thereof to hold the filets together, then cook the fish very slowly over charcoal, basting liberally with melted butter and lemon juice.

Many flounder recipes are good, but this one is the best. I kid you not. □

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The catchall label is bream, but each species on these pages has its own name. Do you know which one is which?

The sunfish family (*Centrarchidae*) contains the crappies, black basses, and "bream." Six of the more common "bream" are pictured here. These are all warmwater panfish frequently creeled by Virginia anglers. How many can you identify?

1 Flier
(Centrarchus macropterus)

Common in the dark stained waters of the coastal plain, it is recognized by the long anal fin (bottom fin), more than 10 dorsal spines (on top), rows of brown spots on a green body, and spotted fins.

2 Warmouth
(Lepomis gulosus)

Frequenting very shallow shoreline cover, the warmouth is often called "stumpknocker," "redeye," or "goggle eye." It is identified by three anal spines, large "bass-like" mouth (extending beyond the middle of the eye), and dark mottling.

3 Bluegill
(Lepomis macrochirrus)

This is the most common sunfish and possibly the most frequently creeled fish in Virginia. Bluegill have a black blotch on the rear of the dorsal fin, a black gill flap, and six to eight indistinct vertical bars on the sides.

4 Redbreast sunfish
(Lepomis auritus)

More common in flowing waters, this sunfish usually has a long black gill flap, orange belly, and blue bands on the face. It is a favorite of canoe fishermen.

5 Pumpkinseed
(Lepomis gibbosus)

The most colorful of all sunfish, the pumpkinseed has bluish bands on the face, red or orange on the lower tip of the opercular flap, and numerous orange and blue spots.

6 Redear
(Lepomis microlophus)

This large "bream" frequently exceeds one pound. Its common name, "shellcracker," comes from its diet which includes small freshwater clams. Not as colorful as the pumpkinseed, the redear has a broad red margin below and behind the opercular lobe, a plain unspotted dorsal fin, and no blue bands on the face. □

Look for answers on page 35.

by Dan Shuber

Gold Rush

At Walker's Dam

by Jack Randolph

Robin Schroeder

"Okay," said the voice on the telephone. "I think I have it. You said tie a half-ounce sinker at the end of the line and put one gold hook about six inches above the sinker and another about six or eight inches above the lower one."

"That's right, " I replied. "Use size six or size four hooks."

"Fine, I have the rig, now what do I use for bait?"

"You don't use bait," I said, waiting for the usual reaction.

"What do you mean, I don't use bait?" exclaimed the caller, incredulously.

"Nope, no bait," I repeated. "Just cast it out and reel it in slowly and you'll likely get a herring every cast."

"You mean you snag them?" said the caller.

"No way," I replied. "You'll hook them in the mouth. In fact, if they're hooked anywhere else, you'd better toss them back because you have technically snagged the fish and that's illegal."

"You gotta be pullin' my leg," said the caller.

"Go on down to Walker's Dam and see for yourself," I advised. "It really works."

There are plenty of fishermen on hand to greet the herring run each spring (above); the quarry (right).

A Herring By Any Other Name

by Mel White

The herring that you catch in our tidal streams in March and April and May are not what most of the rest of the world calls herring. Well, most of them aren't herring, but some are, sort of.

Confused? Even if you are, the names are not important. Most of what you catch on these "herring" runs are good to eat whatever you call them. What you should call most of them is alewife.

Alewives run up our rivers and into the tributary creeks to spawn in March (their upstream travel depends upon water temperature, which can vary from year to year) and the best fishing is usually in May. Traditionally, alewives are caught with dip nets on the smaller streams. "Dipping" is usually done at night and calls for a large net which is held in the current against the stream bottom. The net is placed at a spot where the water is perhaps three feet deep and the stream is not much wider than the net. The net is held in the water until the fish are felt bumping into it. The netter then lifts the net and dumps the catch into a bucket. If you went to the sporting goods store and asked for a 60-inch net, you would be buying the proper thing for "herring" dipping. Most of these nets are an aluminum frame with cotton, or occasionally nylon, webbing. Homemade nets of saplings and chicken wire are a common sight on herring streams.

You'll need a dip net license if you're going to take alewives with a net. The Game Commission issues a $2.00 license good for one specified county. All persons dipping or helping to dip are required to have a license. The Marine Resources Commission sells a dip net license which is valid statewide for $6.00.

What do you do with that huge bucket of "herring " now that you've dipped it? Most people salt down their alewives for home consumption. The first step in the process is to clean and scale the fish, removing the heads and tails. Then the fish are layered with salt in a clean plastic bucket or crock. Plain coarse ground salt is preferred. The salt, along with the moisture in the fish will make a brine. Some people prefer to drain the fish after a day or so and re-salt them, providing, they say, a more palatable end product.

Alewives, fresh or salt, can be cooked like any herring. A few ideas follow on page 30.

And it does work, as hundreds of fishermen who greet the herring run at Walker's Dam each spring will testify.

I wish I could claim that the gold hook gimmick was an idea born here in the Old Dominion, but I first encountered it on the Delaware River near Trenton, New Jersey. We were taking a family ride along the river one late afternoon when I was stationed at Fort Dix. Noting a crowd of anglers, we stopped to see what was going on. They were all using the gold hook rig, catching herring as fast as they could cast, unhooking their catches, and casting again.

In Virginia, the most popular place for hook and line herring fishing is at Walker's Dam on the Chickahominy River near Lanexa, about 20 miles west of Williamsburg off U.S. Route 60.

The dam, which forms the famous Chickahominy Lake, is unique in that it has a lock built into it that permits small boats to pass through the dam. It is manually operated and anyone can operate it. The lock is about six or seven feet wide and is fitted with walkways and rails for about 60 feet. Beyond the lock, water just a couple of inches deep runs over the dam. In all, the dam is about 100 yards long.

Years ago this was a favored location for catching hickory and white shad, but these species have all but vanished from the Chickahominy. The angler may encounter an occasional hickory, but the whites are very rare. Now, the dam is known for its spring herring run.

The herring move up the James River as the water commences to warm in late March or early April. Many of them enter the Chickahominy, arriving at the dam about the second week in April.

Although the fish are universally called herring, most are alewives. Some blueback herring, which are almost identical to alewives, are mixed in. On the Chickahominy and in much of Tidewater Virginia, the mud-shifting gizzard shad are called alewives, adding to the confusion.

When the herring arrive, so do the anglers, in numbers that will put opening day on any trout stream to shame. The

Fried Smoked Herring

8 smoked herring
Pepper
1 cup cornmeal
Oil for cooking

Wash herring and soak in cold water for 12 to 24 hours, changing water twice. Rinse and dry. Sprinkle with pepper and roll in cornmeal. Fry in shallow oil (⅛ to ¼ inch) in skillet for 12 to 15 minutes or until brown and crisp, turning once.

Alewives Baked With Lemon

4 alewives, salted in brine
¼ cup butter or margarine, melted
Juice of 3 lemons

Soak alewives in cold water for 3 or 4 hours. Drain and wipe dry. Split fish open to keep whole. Place, skin-side down, in well-greased shallow baking dish. Combine butter and lemon juice. Spoon half of mixture evenly over fish. Bake in preheated oven (350°F.) for 7 minutes. Spoon remaining butter-lemon mixture evenly over fish and bake for 5 minutes longer. Serve hot with boiled potatoes, garnished with parsley.

Herring in Sour Cream

5 herring in brine
1 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon Worcestershire
½ teaspoon powdered mustard
2 onions, sliced
Dash of pepper
Chopped parsley

Clean herring and soak in cold water for 12 to 24 hours, changing water several times. Remove skin, and bones. Rinse, drain and cut into 1-inch pieces. Combine remaining ingredients; add herring and mix lightly. Place in glass jar; cover. Let stand in refrigerator for about 12 hours before serving.

favorite spots are along the walkways bordering the locks. The herring jam into the locks in unbelievable numbers and it is no trick to fill a five-gallon bucket in a short time.

With fishermen jammed shoulder to shoulder, the area around the lock is a crowded scene that hold the perils of flying hooks and even flying fish. Tangled lines are commonplace, but despite the hectic conditions, tempers remain surprisingly cool.

Dip netting or snagging herring at the dam is a violation of the law, as a few fishermen discover to their sorrow each year. There is really no need to resort to these tactics, because the fish are so plentiful and easily caught.

In the crowded entrance to the locks, it is impossible to use the appropriate light tackle on the feisty herring. Many anglers prefer to fish from the dam, away from the locks where fishing is less crowded, yet reasonably productive. Here they can use ultra-light spinning tackle which must have been designed with herring in mind.

Fresh from the sea, the silvery gamesters put up a sporting battle if allowed to do so. They will run and jump with the best of them. If you happen to hook two at a time, which is not infrequent, you are in for a real circus.

Some anglers prefer to catch herring on miniature shad darts while other anglers stick with the "old reliable" Hilenbrandt "Flicker" spoon in the smallest sizes.

Some anglers like fresh fried herring, but many salt them down to become a winter breakfast delicacy. Herring roe is also highly prized .

The herring stay in the river well into May before returning to the sea. Bass fishermen are usually happy to see them leave the river. Those who are not wise to the ways of the Chickahominy are often fooled by a great many fish breaking water close to the bank. Thinking they are bass, the fishermen fruitlessly cast their arms off. Of course, the fish are actually herring playing spawning games.

A fishing license is required. It is your pass to many hours of hot angling action. □

Roanoke River
STRIPERS

By Gerald Almy

Signs of spring were present everywhere as Garvey Winegar and I made our way east, past Afton Mountain, then south on our journey from the Shenandoah Valley. Redbuds splashed their bright lavender hues on the rich green woods. Virginia bluebells swayed in the soft breeze. Doves with mating on their minds winged by in erratically-flying pairs.

But when we pulled into the Game Commission boat launch just south of Brookneal off US 501, another sure sign of spring was foremost on our minds—the annual run of stripers that surges up the meandering Roanoke (Staunton) River during April and May. Both the Roanoke and nearby Dan River host spring runs of landlocked striped bass out of Kerr Reservoir, and anglers have varying opinions about which river offers the best fishing during the migrations. If you hit the runs at their peaks, however, both can offer outstanding striper sport.

I had called down to the Game Commission's Brookneal Hatchery on the Roanoke, where all of Virginia's stripers for its stocking program are produced, and found out earlier that the runs were late this year by a couple of weeks. Because of that, Garvey and I put off our trip for a while. But now it was early May and we figured we'd better make our move or risk missing the best fishing, which generally comes early in the run.

At least a few other boatloads of anglers thought the time was ripe for the run, as a healthy collection of trailers was lined up neatly in the parking area near the ramp. We eased my 16-foot Lowe aluminum bass boat into the moderately swift Roanoke and pushed off into the swirling, milky-green currents.

I glanced at the depth finder and was shocked to see it read two feet! The 35 hp wouldn't get much of a workout today. I'd been warned by a hatchery spokesman that the 565-pound rig might be a bit much for the river, but our only alternative was a tiny johnboat with a 3½ hp kicker. We were afraid that boat and motor might have been too small to fight the river current coming back upstream, so we opted for the 16-footer.

We weren't about to drive three and a half hours and not get to fish, so I put the motor in shallow drive, gaining five inches of bottom clearance that way, and puttered slowly and cautiously downstream from the launch. A local had recommended the area a mile or two below the hatchery as good striper water. With the help of the current, it didn't take long before we reached that spot and saw a few boats working the shorelines. Bucktails and Rebels graced the tips of their rods.

Besides a few barely-passable areas that were not much over a foot and a half deep, the ride went smoothly. Nowhere, however, did we see any water over five feet deep on the depth finder, not even in the middle of the channel. It would be a tricky trip back, I feared, especially if the water level, controlled by releases at Leesville Reservoir upstream, dropped any further.

But with the boats we passed reporting two to five stripers caught apiece already at 2:30 p.m., mundane matters like getting back to the dock at night would have to wait for later consideration! Striper fever had struck. We fumbled nervously with our tackle and began rigging up a few rods. Garvey cast a ¼-ounce yellow and white bucktail, while I

Two old hands still have more to learn. You can benefit from their experience.

threaded a leader through the eyelets of an 8½-foot graphite fly rod and tied a white bucktail-marabou streamer that I'd designed for stripers onto the 10-pound tippet.

The boats we encountered were all anchored, but Garvey and I are both avid float fishermen. We probably spend more time drifting and casting for smallmouths and panfish from canoes and johnboats than any other type of angling. Thus, we couldn't resist the urge to try the same technique here. The river moved at a perfect clip for dropping casts along the banks and working them back past the rocks and deadfalls scattered along the shore. With the outboard tilted up and the electric trolling motor keeping us under control, we drifted with the current and worked the lures back to our midstream position.

Perhaps the fly rod's only disadvantage in certain fishing situations is getting sufficient depth to reach the quarry. With a high-density sinking tip line, and a fly that I'd tied on a salt-water hook with a split shot crimped onto the front of the hook to form the head and give weight to the offering, depth was no problem here. Since the water we were fishing was barely two or three feet deep, the fly easily reached as far down as I wanted it to.

On the fifth cast a striper quicky proved that point. The fish inhaled the fluttering streamer with a forceful strike and bucked hard against the long, limber pole. I struck back solidly to make sure the hook penetrated beyond the barb, then attempted to control the fish momentarily with the rod while I returned the line lying at my feet onto the spool. The fish made that move unnecessary, however. With a sharp spurt, he ripped the line from my fingers and raced wildly across the river, carrying out all the stripped out line and then some. The drag shrieked stridently. Fortunately, the fish fought either across or downstream during the remainder of his several quick runs and bulldogging sessions. Two hundred yards downstream from where I'd hooked him, I finally slipped the net under the fat five pounder as Garvey snapped away with his camera.

It was only a modest fish by striper standards, but on the fly rod, he displayed uncanny strength. Unfortunately, winds soon picked up, making casting with the weighty fly a draining proposition. I switched to 10-pound line spinning gear with a white bucktail to rest my fly casting arm for a while. We continued to float downstream, probing the blowdowns awash along shore and root structures and rocks where the fish might hold for a few moments on their long ascent upriver for the spawning ritual.

Virginians are fortunate in having one of the few naturally reproducing populations of landlocked stripers in the world. Santee-Cooper Lake in South Carolina also has a naturally reproducing population of stripers, and this is where freshwater striper angling was "born" when fish were trapped in the newly impounded reservoirs in the early 1940's and began reproducing.

Though most of states now have freshwater striped bass fishing in lakes, and fish up to 50 pounds are being taken, almost all of them require stocking with fish bred in hatcheries. The striper egg is semi-buoyant and requires 48 to 72 hours to hatch. It must remain suspended in current for this length of time and not settle to the bottom or the eggs will die. Few lakes have tributary rivers with just the right speed of current and sufficient length to allow this intricate hatching process to succeed.

The Roanoke and Dan Rivers both feed Kerr Reservoir, and each river offers optimum spawning conditions that allow Kerr to support a naturally-bred striped bass population. Equally important, the run of egg-laden females and milt-heavy bucks up the Roanoke each spring supplies all of the young striped bass that are stocked in Virginia's many other top-notch striper lakes such as Smith Mountain, Gaston and Anna.

Ripe females and bucks are taken from the river by Brookneal Hatchery personnel with electro-shocking equipment and brought back to the hatchery in large live wells. Two big females and four bucks are then injected with hormones to speed up the spawning process and placed in huge, 200-gallon doughnut-shaped troughs with constantly swirling water that simulates the river's free-flowing current. This keeps the eggs from settling to the bottom of the troughs and allows them to hatch successfully. Within 24 hours the stripers spawn and they are then placed back in the river, unharmed.

Using the circular-shaped troughs and allowing fish to spawn naturally is a fairly recent development in striper culture. When eggs had to be stripped from females manually, many fish used to die during or after the procedure. Now, mortality is virtually nil.

Said Dick Booker, who works at the hatchery, "I haven't seen a dead fish here all this year."

This striper took a Rapala on spin gear. Fly fishing is productive on the Roanoke during the spawning run in April or May.

Lot Cooke lands a husky Kerr (Buggs Island) striper; this is one of the few lakes in the country with a thriving, naturally-reproducing population of landlocked striped bass. These fish support Virginia's stocking program.

Bacterial infection used to also cause heavy losses among the striper fry after they hatched. Now, says Booker, by treating the eggs before hatching and the fry after they emerge, this problem has been all but eliminated.

The hatchery personnel have also found out that they don't have to feed the young fish, either. "We used to feed them brine shrimp," said Booker. "But if your ponds are in good condition, you don't need to feed them at all before they're shipped out. There are plenty of bugs and plankton for them and we put hay and fertilizer in the ponds to increase the natural food supply available to them."

Fishermen needn't worry about the biologists taking so many stripers out of the river that they hurt the fishing during the run. Tens of thousands of fish surge up the silty river each spring. Only a tiny fraction of them are shocked and used for the stocking program. Even those fish which are taken are returned to the water in a day or so, usually none the worse for their contribution to striped bass fishing in other lakes throughout the state and nation.

Apparently Garvey and I were a bit late for the major run of fish. We met a pair of anglers who had caught 22 stripers four days earlier (releasing all but their four-fish-per-angler limit), 16 the day after that, and only five this day.

Still, there were fair numbers of stripers present. We had started fishing at 2:30 that afternoon, and when evening cast its shadows over the water, six fish had been hooked, five landed. Many other strikes were missed. The top striper on our boat was shy of eight pounds, but at least one 16-pounder had been taken by a shore fisherman that day, on a live bluegill.

White bucktail and marabou streamers in sizes 2/0 to 2 are good choices for the fly fisherman on the Roanoke. And this is one striper fishing situation where the long rod is every bit as effective at taking fish as spinning and baitcast gear. You'll need a rod with a bit of backbone and at least eight feet in length, to throw the big streamers required. A leader of six or seven feet is sufficient, and a tippet testing 10 to 12 pounds should hold almost any fish in the river.

Spinning and baitcast gear are the most popular tackles on the Roanoke during the striper run. With lots of snags to steer fish clear of, and other boats nearby that can cause complications, 10- to 17-pound line is recommended.

Bucktails are the overwhelming first choice of lure tossers and white is the top color. Quarter- to three-eighths-ounce sizes give just the right combination of weight for casting, yet lightness to stay above the snags in these tangle-infested waters. Still, you'll lose a fair number of jigs here, no matter how careful you are. So bring a large number if you plan to fish very long. Pork rind or plastic twister tails on the end of the jig can sometimes entice more strikes. On other occasions, the plain jig works best.

Late in the run, Rapalas and Rebels gain favor over the bucktail jig. Night fishing with these lures is especially productive.

In a typical year, the spawning run will begin in April. Good fishing can last well into May, but there will be lean periods when the stripers have passed by the fishermen and no new waves of fish have yet moved in to take their place. Some stripers will stay in the river into June, when they can be picked up by skilled anglers who know their favorite haunts and fish primarily at night.

Whether to anchor or drift is largely a matter of personal preference. Both tactics produce fish. Drifting covers more territory, but you have to spend more time motoring back upstream this way and maneuvering around the anchored boats. Anchoring out doesn't allow you to show your lure to as many fish as drifting does, but it's definitely easier and saves fuel. When the fish are hitting, both techniques will pay off handsomely.

Before taking off for a Roanoke River striper jaunt, give careful consideration to boat choice. Garvey and I found out the hard way that my 16-foot aluminum bass boat with 35 hp motor was just a bit too much for this river. As we headed back up shortly before dark, we discovered that the river had dropped even further. In shallow drive the propeller churned up silt in several areas, and once we got marooned on a sand bar barely six inches deep. We rolled up our trousers, pulled off our socks and shoes and managed to huff and puff the boat off the bar eventually and finally puttered back to the ramp safe and sound.

True, you'll see some locals zooming up the river full throttle. But they know (hopefully) the twists and turns of the channel and where the dangerous shallows are. Take it slow if you're new on the river, though. A lightweight, shallow-draft boat of 12 to 14 feet with a 7½-15 hp kicker is perfect. With such a boat you can enjoy some of Virginia's finest spring striper sport when the big line-sided bass ascend the Roanoke each year on their annual spawning run. □

First Catch One Fish

by Mel White

What is Virginia's favorite outdoor sport? Fishing is the answer most folks would give, and it certainly gets my vote for first place. Like many people, fishing is just something we've always done. My own devotion to the sport began on the other side of the country catching tomcod off the pier at Seal Beach in California. My mother was a most understanding person and did wonders with the fish I brought home, many of which were of questionable food value. It wasn't till sometime later that I found the wonders of fresh rainbows lightly cooked in butter over the campfire.

We're so fortunate here in Virginia to have so many waters full of such a cornucopia of fish, most all of which are delicious to eat. . .trout, pike, bass, catfish and stripers and many others. And that is only inland. Chesapeake Bay is known the world over for its seafood delights. Here are some good ideas of things to do with fish.

Poached Flounder and Mushrooms in Cream Sauce

1½ pounds fresh flounder fillets
1½ cups fish liquid
1 can (4 ounces) sliced mushrooms
¼ cup butter
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
¾ tablespoon salt
⅛ teaspoon white pepper
½ teaspoon Worcestershire
½ cup light cream
4 slices of hot toast

Poach fish and drain, reserving 1½ cups fish liquid. Separate fish into large flakes. Cook drained mushrooms in butter for 5 minutes; blend in flour, salt, pepper, and Worcestershire. Add fish liquid and cream slowly, then cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add fish and serve over hot toast. Sprinkle with paprika or minced chives or parsley, if desired.

Pike Chowder

2 pounds pike fillets
1/3 cup bacon drippings
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1½ cups chopped onions
1 garlic clove, minced
2/3 cup chopped green pepper
1½ cups diced peeled raw potatoes
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
1¾ quarts water
1 tablespoon Worcestershire
12 whole cloves
Dash of hot pepper sauce
1 tablespoon paprika
1 bay leaf, crumbled
1 tablespoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 lemon, sliced

Wipe fish with a paper towel. Cut into 1-inch pieces. Cook drippings and flour together slowly in large heavy kettle until flour is golden brown. Add onions, garlic, and green pepper. Cook for 5 minutes; add potatoes, tomato paste, water, and seasoning. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add fish; cover and poach for 8 minutes; add lemon slices.

Braised Carp

2 medium onions
Oil
4 carp fillets or steaks
All-purpose flour
2 garlic cloves, chopped
½ cup chopped parsley
Dried thyme
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cup red wine
Olive oil
Tomato puree, about 1 cup
18 to 20 ripe olives

Chop the onions coarsely and place them on a well-oiled baking pan. Dip the fillets into flour and arrange them on the bed of onions. Sprinkle with the garlic, parsley, thyme, salt and pepper. Add the red wine to the pan and then drizzle olive oil all over the fish. Top each fillet with 3 tablespoons tomato puree. Bake in preheated oven (425°F.) for 15 to 18 minutes, basting often with the wine in the pan. Remove fish to a hot serving platter. Blend the sauce in the pan with 3 or 4 more tablespoons tomato puree and add the ripe olives. Pour the sauce around the fish.

Carp Cakes

2 cups flaked, cooked carp fillets or pressure cooked & ground carp
1 teaspoon salt
Pepper to taste
1 teaspoon sage
1 egg
½ teaspoon instant minced onion
Butter
Cracker meal

Mix everything except the butter and cracker meal, then add just enough cracker meal so the cakes will form. Roll carp cakes in cracker meal and saute in enough butter to brown on both sides.

Sunfish With Anchovy Fillets

6 medium sunfish
Seasoned all-purpose flour
Oil for frying
3 tablespoons butter or margarine
4 anchovy fillets, cut fine
½ cup white wine
1 teaspoon chopped fresh or dried mint
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Juice of 1 lemon

Roll fish in seasoned flour. Heat enough oil to cover bottom of skillet. Panfry fish for about 5 minutes on each side. Meanwhile, melt butter in small pan, add anchovy fillets, and heat for 5 minutes. Add wine, mint, and parsley and simmer for 3 minutes; add lemon juice. Put fish on hot platter and pour sauce over all. Serve at once.

10-Minute Microfish

1 pound largemouth bass fillets
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 can cream of celery soup
2 tablespoons butter
¼ cup dry white wine
1 cup grated Swiss cheese
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 teaspoons chopped parsley
2 tablespoons dry bread crumbs
Paprika

Combine onion and butter in a 2 quart glass baking dish. Microwave on high 3 minutes. Stir in soup, wine, cheese, lemon juice and parsley. Arrange fish in sauce, coating each side. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and paprika. Microwave on high 7 minutes. Let stand covered 5 minutes before serving.

Pickled Herring

6 herring in brine
1 onion, sliced
½ lemon, sliced
1½ cups cider vinegar
3 bay leaves
⅛ teaspoon crushed red pepper
1½ teaspoons mustard seeds
½ teaspoon sugar

Clean herring and soak in cold water for 12 to 24 hours, changing water several times. Remove head and bones; rinse and drain. Arrange in covered refrigerator dish in layers with onion and lemon. Combine vinegar with remaining ingredients. Bring to boil; cool; pour over herring. Store, covered, in refrigerator for 3 to 4 days before serving.

Pickled Herring

1 large dried, salted herring
1 medium-sized red onion, sliced
Whole allspice
¾ cup white vinegar
¼ cup water
¼ cup sugar
Whole peppercorns
1 large bay leaf
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

Soak fish 12 to 24 hours in cold water. Drain, rinse and cut into fillets by carefully slicing the strips from the bones. Arrange fillets in a flat glass or ceramic serving dish and lay onion slices on top of them. Crush 6 whole allspice and sprinkle over onions. Combine vinegar, water, sugar, 4 allspice, peppercorns (to taste), and bay leaf in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Let mixture cool, then strain and chill before pouring over fish fillets. Allow fillets to marinate at least overnight in refrigerator (covered) before serving. Garnish with dill.

Rollmops

6 herring in brine
Prepared mustard
2 small sour pickles, sliced
2 onions, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon capers
1 red pepper, cut up
6 peppercorns
2 bay leaves
1½ cups cider vinegar
1 cup water

Clean herring and soak in cold water for 12 to 24 hours, changing water several times. Remove bones, rinse and drain. Spread herring with prepared mustard, pickle slices, onion slices, and capers. Roll up each herring and secure with toothpicks. Place in small container with red pepper, peppercorns, and bay leaves. Do not use a metal container. Boil together vinegar and water. Cool; pour over herring. Cover and let stand for 3 to 6 days. Drain before serving. Serve with sour cream, if desired.

Broiled Herring

8 mild kippers
¼ cup melted butter
Juice of 1 lemon
Paprika
3 teaspoons chopped scallions

Without breaking the skin along the back, split kippers and spread butterfly-style, skin-side down in shallow baking dish. Brush with butter and lemon juice, sprinkle with paprika, and bake in preheated moderate oven (350°F.) for 10 minutes. Garnish with scallions.

Take a Kid Fishing

The little fisherman walked gingerly through the rain-soaked grass, flanked by his father and mother. His shy face barely visible beneath his round yellow rain hat, enveloped by a matching poncho, he looked small and vulnerable in the pouring rain. Yet, he looked proud, too. Aha! Hoisted laboriously to shoulder level was a stringer of three dripping rainbow trout he had caught from the surging waters of the Tye River.

As folks rushed to take the picture of this extraordinarily photogenic lad of about five years, he maintained a serious expression, in complete control. Maybe he was just speechless from having had a chance, without adult competition, to catch not one or two but three fine rainbow trout from the fabled Tye.

How did such a wee one have an opportunity to do so well on this, the opening day of the 1982 trout season?

The odds of his succeeding were vastly improved when members of the Thomas Jefferson Chapter of Trout Unlimited in Charlottesville decided to sponsor a "Take a Kid Fishing" project on the Tye, modelled on a similar venture by the Rapidan Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) last year (and in '82), on the Rose River in Madison County. Over 300 children, ages 12 and under, turned out on the Rose.

As if that level of participation weren't enough to justify the event—and subsequent repetitions of it—there are other reasons for TU's interest in sponsoring such projects. The most compelling was related by Max Ailor, the skillful outdoor writer for the Richmond *Times Dispatch*. Max wrote of a small girl, fishing gear in hand, who arrived early at a promising, large pool on a previous trout season's opening day. She staked out her spot and patiently waited for the noon starting time.

Alas, others, mostly adults and larger children, spied this likely-looking pool, and they crowded around it. By noon, our little girl had been overwhelmed by the bigger folks. She had no room to comfortably cast her small spinning rod and caught nothing.

I'm sure no one intentionally denied this neophyte fisherperson her chance to catch a trout, but one of TU's main objectives is to ensure that she can be assured of an opportunity now.

Part of Trout Unlimited's motivation originates in its own reason for being: To protect the trout fishery in this country from damming, mining, pesticides, logging, road-building, effluent dumping and the myriad other threats to the continued existence of our pure, clear, cold trout streams.

Surely, at least some of our small fry participants will get a glimmer that trout sreams aren't just "there" by some magical decree of Big Bird or Miss Piggy. At any rate, we bet lots of their parents will be more aware of why organizations such as TU are needed in America.

The event's coordinator, Jim Hernandez, enlisted the help of Price Smith, fisheries biologist with the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and game warden Gary Brantley. Together they selected a site and secured permission from the landowners, Marjorie Hatter and Byron Bradley, to conduct the event on their property. Then they got permission from Jack Hoffman, chief of the Commission's fish division, to hold the event.

April 3 dawned cool and rainy, with no relief in sight until well afer the noon starting time. Some thought opening day might be called off, but that would be like trying to stay the dawn, albeit a watery one.

The TU'ers in charge didn't know quite what to expect. Julius Marymor's publicity material had been sent far and wide. The Skyline Chapter in Lynchburg had joined in our project, and TU members from the Shenandoah Valley Chapter in Waynesboro, the Massanutten Chapter in Harrisonburg and the Virginia Capital Chapter in Richmond were to be on hand. John Baxter and John Criner, who want to start a TU Chapter in Tidewater, had driven up from Norfolk.

The question was: How many parents would want (or allow) their children to brave the unsavory elements to go trout fishing? Would there be 20 or 75 or a zillion?

Well, in spite of the rain, we had about 175 kids fishing in that river. They had a ball. We had a ball. Their parents had a ball. And free lance writer Taylor Dabney and an independent TV crew had soggy but satisfying stories to tell.

Sure, we got wet. But it wasn't cold enough for this to be a real problem. Besides, what child is going to notice he's wet when he's landing a 17-inch rainbow and his friend's just hooked a 12-incher? And most of the children did catch at least one trout in this heavily stocked portion of the Tye.

With the Game Commisson/Trout Unlimited effort, something must have been done right. One happy parent exclaimed, "This is the greatest thing you people have ever done!"

Sandwiches, hot coffee and ham biscuits were available under the TU tent, courtesy of the ladies of the Roseland Rescue Squad. That helped!

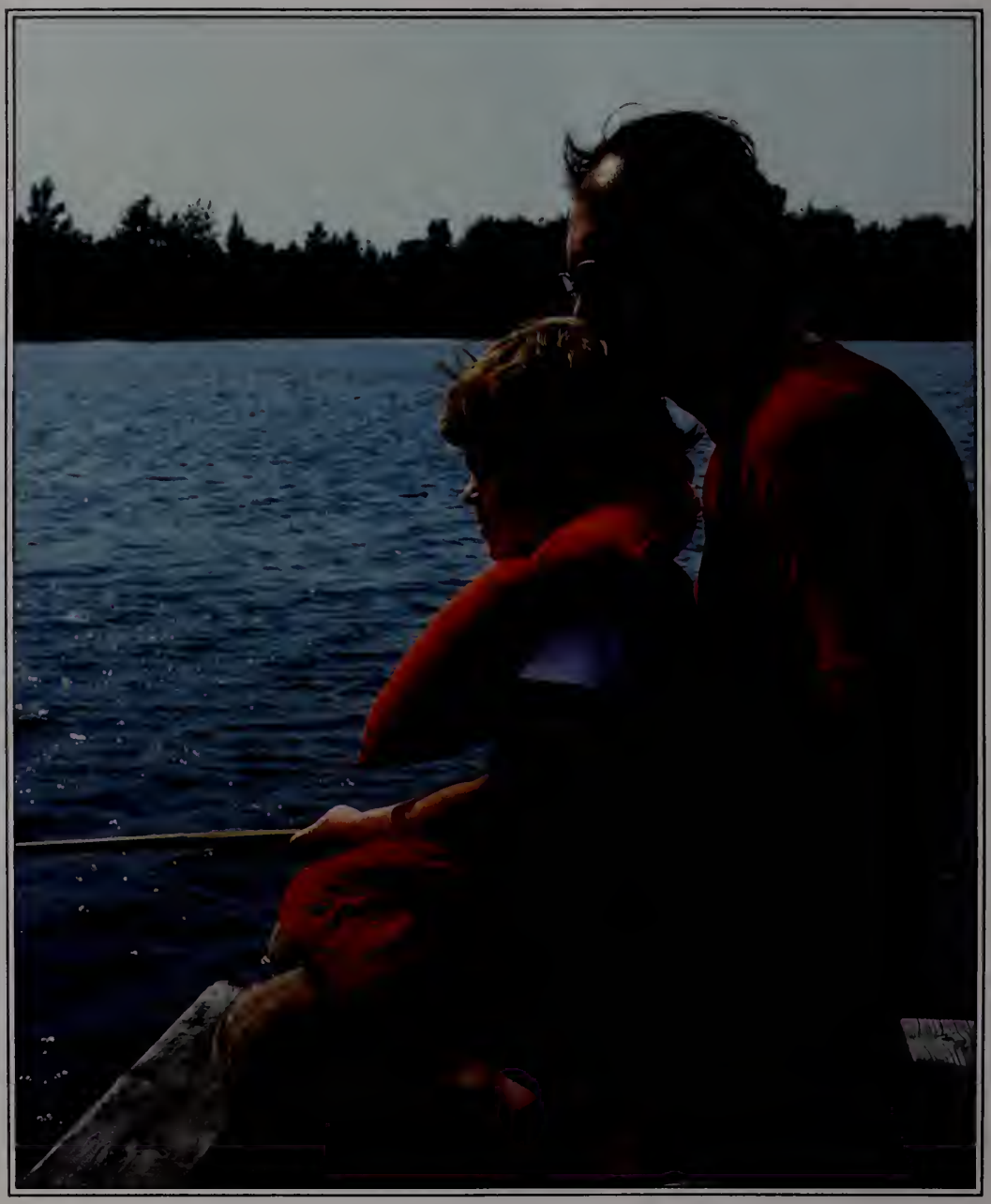
Cooperation by all was splendid—only one or two adults entered the area to fish, mistakenly, and they departed politely. And the parents really did let the children do the fishing.

Hats off to all involved, especially Mrs. Hatter, Mr. Bradley and Jim Hernandez and his wife, Inez, and to media representatives such as Garvey Winegar, whose newspaper articles helped inform the public of TU's plans.—*Bob Belton*

Answers to the Bream Quiz
From pages 24 and 25

3	Bluegill	Warmouth	2
4	Redbreast sunfish	Pumpkinseed	5
1	Flier	Redear	6

Chart corresponds to chart on page 25.



Take a Kid
FISHING

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